



THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 39.

Price, Five Cents.



"I ARREST YOU AS DESERTERS FROM THE UNITED STATES ARMY," SAID BUFFALO BILL, STERNLY, TO THE GANG OF DESPERADOES.



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No. 39.

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Price Five Cents.

Buffalo Bill's Duel;

OR,

AMONG THE MEXICAN MINERS.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER I.

FOES ON THE TRAIL.

It was an enviable service to be ordered upon, in spite of its dangers, and each young officer of the fort felt sorry that he had not been chosen as the fortunate man to command the escort for two pretty girls down into the mining country of New Mexico.

Lieutenant Adrian Valdos, a man with a romantic and mysterious life, had been the officer selected, with Buffalo Bill as the guide and scout, to escort the two girls—Sue Turpin, a daughter of a rich miner, and her devoted friend, Marcelite Monastery, the daughter of the colonel commanding the military district—upon their long and perilous trail.

Miner Turpin had written for Sue to join him at his mining home, and, urged by the young girl, and

permission given by the colonel, Marcelite had been most glad to go with her.

It was also decided, after the colonel and Adrian Valdos had had a long conversation aside, that Lieutenant Valdos should act as escorting officer, to join them at their first night's camp on the trail, while Buffalo Bill was to go as scout and guide, with a sergeant, corporal, and sixteen troopers as a guard.

In addition there was to be Marcelite's quadroon maid, a negro cook and a couple of horse wranglers to look after the ladies' horses and pack animals, for a complete camp outfit was to be taken along for their comfort.

Both the young ladies had been satisfied with this arrangement, as far as the officer in charge was concerned, but made no comment upon the fact that he

was to join them the first night on the trail, and not depart from the fort with them.

The cavalcade started at the appointed time from the fort, Buffalo Bill in the lead, and at the camp, the first night out, they found awaiting them Adrian Valdós, the handsome young officer who was to command the escort.

Buffalo Bill and the lieutenant had a long talk together, for both knew that the dangers of the trail were great, and they had a heavy responsibility upon them in the care of the two young ladies.

It was the morning after the second night's camp on the trail that Buffalo Bill was observed to be in a hurry to get away.

He had noticed signs the night before, which he did not like, and, though speaking only of his fears to the lieutenant, he appeared as serene as ever, he was really anxious, and neither he nor Kit Carrol, his assistant scout, closed their eyes all night, while the sentinels were quietly doubled, so as not to give the ladies any alarm.

The night passed without any disturbance, but Buffalo Bill had the camp awake at the first peep of day, and his scouts got all ready to start by the time the sun was rising.

"Is there any danger, Lieutenant Valdós?" asked Marcelite, who had quickly noticed that something had caused alarm.

"Buffalo Bill has discovered Indian signs, and is anxious to be on the march," was the reply.

As they got some distance away from the camp, Buffalo Bill, as he went over a rise, turned and looked back.

As he did so, he distinctly caught sight of a form moving in the timber.

Quickly turning in his saddle, with his glass to his eyes, he saw several horsemen riding into the deserted camp.

"Yes, they are on our trail, and I only hope they have not divided and gone ahead to ambush us.

"If they do, it means the ambush will be at Sentinel Pass," mused Buffalo Bill, and he rode on over the ridge.

Once out of the sight of the Indians in the deserted camp, he halted and beckoned to the sergeant to join him.

"Sergeant, there are redskins already in the camp we left, but how many I do not know, only I saw tracks of fully a hundred ponies last night.

"Drop back and ask Lieutenant Valdós to join me, and then tell Kit Carrol to hang further back in the rear and look to be closely followed."

"Yes, sir," and the sergeant rode back to obey orders.

In five minutes Lieutenant Valdós was with the scout, and asked:

"Well, Bill, more signs?"

"More than signs, sir, for I saw redskins in our deserted camp, just as I came over the ridge."

"A stern chase is proverbially a long one, Buffalo Bill."

"True, sir, but the trail I saw last night numbered a hundred ponies, and that means about as many warriors."

"And we need not have any fear, for we have twenty-one fighting men, with the two ladies, the two horse wranglers and Black Bob to call on in a pinch."

"We are all right, sir, in the open country, or on the trail; but I believe this is the same force we saw on the trail of at our first night's camp, and if so it means that they are following us."

"All yesterday I steered clear of any place to a bush, so they may have come on to watch their chance and catch us in a trap, for to-day there are several places where we can be ambuscaded, notably the Sentinel Pass."

"Any way to avoid it, Buffalo Bill?"

"Yes, sir; I can avoid it by a ride of a dozen miles out of our way."

"You had better do so; we want no fight if we can avoid it, for bullets and arrows are no respecters of persons."

"True, sir, and to have either of those young ladies killed would just about break my heart."

"Mine, too; so we will only stand at bay as a last resort."

"I have no fear for the pluck of the ladies, sir, for Miss Monastery, as you know, has been in half-a-dozen Indian fights, while Miss Turpin has burned powder and seen men die, too, so they have nerves that will stand the strain, only, as you said, bullets and arrows strike at random.

"You will understand, then, sir, if I branch off from the trail?"

"Certainly, and I will keep the command well posted up," and Buffalo Bill was left again alone at the head of the party.

For himself, he was a man to love the ring of rapons, the shouts of a fierce combat, and gloried in a combat unto death, but with two such fair charges along, his brow became clouded as he dreaded the fate that might befall them.

He, therefore, kept well ahead of his command, and thus held on until the noon halt.

Not another sign of an Indian had been seen, but Buffalo Bill was too experienced a scout to believe they had drawn off, so the closest watch was kept, and Kit Carrol was given his dinner and told to camp back a mile on the trail.

The foresight of the scout was soon shown in this, just as dinner was completed, Kit Carrol was seen far off on a hill, signaling wildly.

The camp was at once in commotion, the horses being bridled and saddled, and all made ready for a retreat, just as Kit Carrol's rifle went to his shoulder and began to ring out shots rapidly.

A moment after, he was seen to spring into his saddle and came dashing toward the camp.

Buffalo Bill was as cool as an icicle now, and Lieutenant Valdos as serene as a May morning, while neither Marcelite nor Sue showed any signs of fear.

"We will push on at a good pace, sir, until the Indians come in sight and show their numbers," said Buffalo Bill, and, as Kit neared them, suddenly over the ridge where he had been posted dashed a number of mounted warriors.

"Fifty," said Buffalo Bill, quietly, as he counted them, and added:

"We may look for fifty ahead, for these are only intended to drive us into ambush."

Kit Carrol told how he had discovered the Indians coming along on the trail, and seemingly in no hurry until they sighted him, though they knew there was a force not far ahead he felt most certain.

He had stood his ground, after signaling, until they came within range of his repeating rifle, and then, aiming deliberately, had opened fire with good result.

The Indians came on with a rush, as though to drive the soldiers into a run, or bring them to a halt. Lieutenant Valdos and the rear squad of troopers halted and opened fire when they came within range, while the others, with Buffalo Bill ahead, continued on their way at a steady pace.

The fire of the corporal and his eight men, with the repeating rifles of Lieutenant Valdos and Scout Carrol, brought down several ponies and emptied a couple of saddles, a check which brought the Indians to a halt, for their rifles carried little better than their arrows.

"We are all right now, for they will keep at a more respectful distance," said the officer, and he followed on with his men.

All the feints of the Indians failing to bring the soldiers to a halt, or put them in rapid flight, they contented themselves with following at a distance just out of range, singing their war songs, interspersed occasionally with wild yells.

As the party neared the range ahead, in which was the Sentinel Pass, they came to a valley thickly timbered, and here Buffalo Bill rode back and joined the lieutenant.

"I wish to say, sir, that we can branch off here to the left, along the banks of the brook and not be seen by any lookout on Sentinel Pass, or by those who are following us."

"You know best, Bill."

"You see, sir, we can guard the approach here easily, and they can be made to believe we have gone into camp for the night."

"Yes."

"By following the stream you will come, after a ride of half-a-dozen miles, to the foothills, and there you can halt for our coming, for I will remain here half-an-hour with the sergeant and one squad of men. Kit can go on with you, sir."

"All right, Bill."

"The Indians, when they believe we have camped for the night, will signal, with smoke, to their comrades at the pass, and they will quietly await our coming to-morrow."

"And you really believe that there are more at the pass?"

"Yes, sir, the rest of the one hundred whose trail we saw."

"We have seen no trail left by them."

"They flanked to get there, sir."

"Well, Bill, I am too old an Indian fighter myself not to look for anything they might do, so I feel that you are right."

"I will continue on with the party, and await you at the foothills."

"Yes, sir; the rest here now will benefit our horses, and the halt at the foothills will help yours, and I do not believe we will be closely followed by those now in our rear."

So the party rode on, leaving Buffalo Bill, the sergeant and eight men in the rear.

The nature of the ground prevented the Indians from seeing the party divide, and, as the scout at once had campfires built and placed sentinels, it gave the impression that a halt had been made for the night, at a point which could be well defended.

As soon as the sentinels had been placed upon positions where they could be seen by the Indians, and at the same time have the protection of the rocks, Buffalo Bill set to work to use a little strategy.

Two extra uniforms were taken and stuffed with leaves, a face was made of a handkerchief and a hat put on a manufactured head.

Two of the soldiers had carved an imitation carbine from the dead limb of a tree, and when the dummy soldier was all ready, a squad marched to the

two sentinel posts, as though relieving guard, placed them on duty in the place of the live senti-

The two men just put there had been told not to move on their posts, and, knowing that the Indians were watching them, though not visible, as they were camped beyond a ridge, the "dummy sentinels" were left on post.

The campfires were then replenished with wood, and Buffalo Bill made a short scout toward the mountains to see that there were none of them very near.

He returned by the posts of the sentinels, stopped as though for a few minutes' talk with each, and then, returning to the camp, mounted his horse and told the soldiers on the trail after their comrades, all rejoicing greatly the strategy of the scout to keep the Indians from immediately following them.

"They will discover the cheat after night comes, when they creep up to pick off the sentinels, and then they will be mad clean through," explained Buffalo Bill.

After a ride of six miles they came to the foothills when the sun was just an hour above the western horizon, and their comrades enjoyed also, when told of it, Buffalo Bill's strategic joke upon the redskins.

Having disposed of supper, they started on the climb of the mountain, with Buffalo Bill in the lead, for he had thus avoided the Sentinel Pass on previous occasions, and so knew the trail.

CHAPTER II.

THE ATTACK OF THE INDIANS.

Buffalo Bill rode to the front like a man who took his life as it came, and yet he full well appreciated the great responsibility upon him of saving those whom he was acting as guide and scout.

He felt full confidence in his commander, for he knew that he could be depended upon and would not yield to him when he knew the situation demanded.

Kit Carrol he knew as a thorough scout and a man who would die by his side bravely if it came to that, while the sergeant and the soldiers had but

picked as old Indian fighters and men of nerve and pluck.

With the two maidens not easily frightened, and also able to lend a hand, as were also the two horse wranglers and Black Bob, the cook, if called upon, Buffalo Bill felt that in an open fight he had no reason to fear the hundred Indians who were, he was sure, determined to capture his outfit.

He led the way over the mountain by a trail which many a man would have shrunk from following, and yet he heard not a murmur, saw not the slightest hesitation in any one who was following his lead.

As he had hoped, he got over the worst part of the trail before night came on, and the descent of the range on the other side was begun while the glimmer of daylight yet lingered.

The scout felt certain that he had left the Indians deceived as to their having gone, and that those who were at Sentinel Pass would only discover their escape from their trap when too late to do more than pursue.

He saw that the horses were feeling the hard ride, the climb and descent of the mountain after a good day's journey, but he was anxious to reach a clump of timber some miles away, where he had camped before, and where he knew there was good water, grass, and a position easily defended as well.

He did not doubt but that the Indians would follow, when they discovered that they had been outwitted, but as pursuers he had much less to fear from them, and was sure that they would not go a great deal further away from their own country than their present location.

It was ten o'clock when the plain was reached on the other side of the mountain, and so, without resting the horses, Buffalo Bill urged on the flight for the camping-place he had in mind.

An hour's hard riding brought them to the timber, which the scout boldly penetrated just before going in with the command.

The place was as silent as a grave, and fires were not lighted, the tents pitched and supper was being prepared, for all were tired out and hungry.

The horses had been quickly stripped and staked out near at hand, and the sentinels were placed out upon the plain beyond where the horses were feeding, while Buffalo Bill and Kit Carrol scouted around to see that there was no danger lurking near.

Before retiring, just what should be done in case of a surprise was arranged. Buffalo Bill and Kit Carrol were to divide the night between them in walking the rounds of the camp some distance further out than the sentinels.

It was just at dawn when Buffalo Bill cantered into the camp and aroused the sleepers.

"I heard a sound far off on the plain that must be caused by the fall of many hoofs," he cried. "The Indians discovered our escape sooner than we expected, and are coming on, for they know we must ford the stream at this point, so do not have to follow our trail. It will be well to call the horses in, sir, and station the men so we can give them a surprise, for, believing that we consider ourselves safe, they expect to surprise us."

"I will get everything ready at once, Buffalo Bill," answered Lieutenant Valdos. He went the rounds of the camp, ordered the horses brought in and corralled and the men to stand ready to give battle.

Buffalo Bill had awakened Kit Carrol, and the two had gone back together on the plains, nearly half-a-mile from the camp.

The sound that had attracted the attention of Buffalo Bill, was louder now, a dull, rumbling sound like far-away thunder.

"They are coming, chief, and there are lots of 'em," said Kit Carrol.

"Yes, the sound indicates a heavier force than a hundred horses, so I judge another band came up and pushed right on to run over our camp, found it was deserted and then went on to the Pass."

"That's just about it, chief.

"Do you think we had better light out?"

"No, for there is not another good place to stand them off within twenty miles.

"We can check them here, and if we have to re-

treat will make a running fight of it, for they cannot head us off."

As the sound grew louder, and Buffalo Bill knew that the Indians were not far off, he sent Kit Carrol back to the camp to tell the lieutenant he had better advance a few hundred yards with his men and take position in the first group of rocks. Just then the shadowy outline of many horsemen coming toward them became visible.

It was a certainty that the Indians were sure that those they sought had continued their flight through the night, or were so sure that they would not be pursued they would not be particularly watchful, for they came on as though with no dread of discovery.

"They are going to halt at these very rocks and maneuver from here. When you fire, sir, let the men retreat quietly by fours, and they will still think you hold this position," said Buffalo Bill. "When daylight reveals to the contrary, our guns can reach them from the timber, while they cannot reach us."

"Now, sir," and Buffalo Bill pointed to the shadowy horsemen just visible in the gray of dawn, and within range.

"Ready, men! Fire!" cried Lieutenant Valdos, and eighteen carbines and three repeating rifles crashed together, bringing the redskins quickly to a halt and revealing the fact that their foes had been brought to bay.

The moment that the volley rang out, the soldiers were ordered to retreat rapidly and take up a position in the timber, the lieutenant, Buffalo Bill and Kit Carrol remaining with their repeating rifles, which they continued to empty at the redskins.

The latter hastily retreated out of range, but they had suffered loss in both braves and ponies, and there was little doubt but that they had been taken wholly by surprise, when they had expected to surprise their foes.

Having emptied his rifle, Lieutenant Valdos also retreated to the timber at the suggestion of Buffalo Bill, leaving the two scouts alone to hold their stand among the rocks, and not at the timber.

The redskins could only await the rising of the sun,

which would reveal the situation completely, and the palefaces even more anxiously awaited the coming of light, that they might behold the strength of their enemy.

At last the first rays of the rising sun fell over the plain. All seemed quiet in the timber and among the rocks.

The Indians were a quarter of a mile beyond the rocks, and had taken their dead and wounded with them, but half-a-dozen ponies lying upon the ground was proof that equally as many warriors, if not more, had fallen, for the carbines and rifles had been aimed high, to strike human targets.

The first glance of the palefaces showed that Buffalo Bill had been right in his surmise that the Indians had been reinforced, for they could count no less than over two hundred warriors in full view.

The reinforcements had evidently come up with the party awaiting near the camp of the day before, and, confident in their numbers, had advanced, hoping to drive the soldiers upon their force in ambush in Sentinel Pass.

This had shown that the enemy had flown, and the fire had revealed the direction the trail had gone.

So they followed over the mountains, after sending a courier to bring on the party from the Pass, and all had united and come directly toward the ford, knowing that the enemy could only cross there.

Feeling assured that the palefaces had moved steadily on in their flight during the night, the Indians had been taken wholly by surprise when fired upon.

Such was Buffalo Bill's idea of what had been the enemy's movements, and it was the correct one, but, to his regret, he found that they had more than doubled their force, so were all of eight to one against the soldiers.

When the dawn revealed the position of the soldiers in the woods, a very secure spot for defense where water and grass were at hand, the Indians broke forth in a shrill yell of triumph.

The expression of Buffalo Bill's face did not change, but he said quietly:

"Kit?"

"Yes, chief."

"They do not know but that we met other soldiers here, so go back and say to Lieutenant Valdos that it would be a good idea to move the men about in the timber, in squads, and singly, so that we can appear to have three or four times the force we have."

"It's a good idea, sir," answered Kit, and he was starting off, when Buffalo Bill called out:

"Say, Kit?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tell the lieutenant that he can cut sticks, and with the lariats and a couple of logs make a dummy cannon."

"A cannon, sir?"

"Yes, the soldiers can soon rig up a dummy that will look like a cannon, and haul it into a position where the Indians will see it, for you know they are more afraid of what they call the 'wheel guns' than anything else."

"That's so, sir."

"But they must get the ladies to cut up a red blanket, and stripe their uniforms with it, as well as alter their hats to caps, for you know redskins are cunning, and know that red trimmings mean the artillery service."

Kit laughed and replied:

"You are a dandy, chief."

"You might tell him to rig up two dummy guns, and by making a show of artillery and force, they will think we have at least a hundred men, and you bet they won't charge us with those guns in sight."

So Kit Carrol hastened back to the timber, and, finding Lieutenant Valdos breakfasting with the two young ladies, he told him of Buffalo Bill's ruse. All laughed at this conceit, but the officer at once set out to carry it into effect, while Marcelite and Sue went to work cutting up a red blanket for the men to put the stripes on their uniforms to aid the deception.

In a few minutes a dozen of the troopers came rushing in on horseback. They had stolen off

quietly to a considerable distance, and looked as though they were fresh cavalry just coming in.

Ten minutes after, twenty men marched the rounds of the timber, as though placing guards; and squads of half a dozen were seen going here and there.

The horses were led about, too, and the strip of woods, a couple of acres in size, seemed to be alive with men.

The Indians were carefully watching every movement of their foes, as was Buffalo Bill from the rocks. The scout smiled grimly as he muttered:

"They are playing the game well, for I could swear that there are a hundred men in that clump of timber—ah! there comes the artillery into position."

As the scout spoke four horses were swung up to the edge of the timber with what certainly appeared to be a light gun and limber, with the artillerymen in attendance, and a short while after a second "gun" moved up from another point, and was placed for service.

The effect upon the Indians was electrical, and the stern face of Buffalo Bill broke into a broad smile as he saw the success of his ruse, for the redskins quickly fell back beyond the ridge for safety from the "wheel guns" that looked so threateningly at them from the shadows of the timber.

CHAPTER III.

SOME SECRET POWERS.

While Buffalo Bill was busy regarding the dummy guns through his glass, Kit Carrol cantered up to him, saying:

"We did it, chief."

"Yes, and well, for I could swear that there was quite a force in the timber. We must build a dozen different fires for breakfast, so as to keep up the deceit."

"There is not a redskin in sight," said Kit. "They want you to come to breakfast."

"I'll go now, and you remain here. I do not think we will be attacked now, but they will lay a

siege to starve us out," and Buffalo Bill went back to the timber.

He was congratulated for his successful ruse by both the lieutenant and the young ladies, and, as he looked at the "guns," he could not but see that they had been most skillfully made, for yellow blankets had been fastened around logs to look like brass guns, and the wheels had been made of sticks and saplings, bound securely with lassoes.

The men had the red stripes on their uniforms, and when Buffalo Bill suggested the building of a dozen fires, it was quickly done to add to the appearance of numbers.

"What do you think they will do now, Mr. Cody?" asked Sue, as she handed the scout a cup of coffee.

"Thank you, Miss Sue; I am indeed honored—why, Miss Marcelite, this is breakfast enough for a grizzly bear," he said, as he took from Marcelite his well-filled plate; but, answering Sue's question, he said:

"As I look upon you young ladies as aides to the commanding officer and know that you possess nerve enough for any men, I'll tell you frankly that I believe the Indians will set in to starve us out."

"But we have plenty of provisions."

"Yes, Miss Marcelite, but they can surround this place, getting to cover from a quarter to half a mile away.

"Now, the grass within our range will last the horses about two days, though water is plentiful; but we do not wish to remain here besieged, so it is for Lieutenant Valdos to say what is to be done, for I can run the gantlet of their lines and go to the fort to the southward sixty miles after aid."

"That means perhaps three days before aid comes, Bill, and seeing you depart would be an evidence of weakness, so that the Indians might make an attack, and if so, it would show that our guns were useless and our force small."

"You are right, lieutenant, and I suggested the other course only in case you felt you could hold out here."

"You have another plan, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let us have it, then, for you know how thoroughly I rely upon you for aid, Buffalo Bill."

"Thank you, sir, for the compliment. My plan would be to move out after dark, well spread out, to

show a larger force than we have, and to rig the guns so that we can carry them along.

"We can head for the fort, and by dawn be forty miles away, and then camp for the day, so as not to show our weakness, and I hardly believe the Indians will charge us, from fear of the supposed guns. If they do, we must fight them off as best we can."

Lieutenant Valdos made no reply, and all gazed anxiously upon his face.

As he remained silent so long, Marcelite said:

"You do not approve of this second plan, the Lieutenant Valdos?"

"It is the best, I believe, with one exception."

"And that is?"

"I will see what I can do to drive those redskins off."

From this remark it seemed as though the lieutenant had lost his head with vanity, and Buffalo Bill was the only one who did not smile at his words.

But Marcelite said:

"Now, if you know any way in which you can stampede these redskins, Lieutenant Valdos, I beg you to try it."

"Yes, and we will pray for your success in this world and salvation in the next," added Sue, with a smile.

"I am not sure of success, but I will do my best, young ladies. If I fail you have a good command to depend upon in Buffalo Bill," and Lieutenant Valdos arose and walked over to where his pack-saddle was.

They saw him take something from the saddlebags. What it was they did not know. He ordered his horse saddled and brought to him.

The two girls and Buffalo Bill watched him closely. He waved his hand pleasantly and said:

"You are in command, Buffalo Bill, until my return."

"Yes, sir," and the scout saluted as the officer rode away.

Leaving the timber, he rode directly toward the ridge, yet avoiding the rocks where the scout Carr was on guard.

Every eye was upon him, and as he neared the ridge they saw him make some movements with his hands and arms, and remove his hat.

Then above the ridge appeared scores of feathered bonneted heads, as the Indians watched him approach, so daringly, right into their midst.

Nearer and nearer he went, until he ascended the ridge, and not once looking back toward his own camp, went out of sight, just as the Indians gathered around him in scores.

"That man has some secret power, some hold upon them, as I have always felt he had," muttered Buffalo Bill.

"Buffalo Bill, what do you mean?"

So asked Marcelite, as she stood with Sue Turpin and the scout, watching the strange scene that had taken place—an army officer riding boldly into the midst of a band of hostile savages.

"Yes, Mr. Cody, what can it mean?" asked Sue.

Every soldier's eye had been upon the lieutenant as he rode away from the timber.

They were completely mystified as to his actions.

They had seen the Indians come upon the ridge and receive him, and he had not been shot or dragged from his horse.

In fact, he seemed to have been received not as a foe.

Answering the questions of the two maidens, Buffalo Bill said:

"You may have heard, Miss Marcelite, that when Major (then Captain) Canfield was caught in a trap by the Comanches, and Lieutenant Valdos rescued him, all then said that he was friendly with the redskins?"

"Yes, apparently their friend, yet their foe, and I heard it explained afterward that he, having been a physician by profession, had rendered them great service when an epidemic was ravaging their villages.

"But these are not Comanches, you know."

"Very true, but you recall that he afterward saved your party by his knowledge of the country and the friendship the Comanches held for him."

"True, but, as I said, these Indians are Sioux."

"But there exists among all tribes a sign language, and they all know the signs when made them in token of peace."

"And you think that Lieutenant Valdos knows these signs?"

"I am sure of it."

"Else he could not have gone among them as he has, and if they withdraw, then you need no further proof."

"No; yet why do you think he knows their secret signs, known to the Indians alone?"

"Well, he could not believe his brother was killed, as Major Canfield and all reported, and told your father that he felt sure that he had given some sign that protected him from death."

"But that was his brother, the outlaw."

"True, and when asked if he also knew the signs, I noticed he gave an evasive answer to the question."

"Ah!"

"That convinced me that he did know the secret power, or signs, to exert over the Indians. Now, I am sure that he has taken the chances, taken his life in his hands, to see what power his knowledge of the secret signs will have over the Indians."

"He is a brave fellow, and Heaven grant that he be not harmed."

"The way he was received by the redskins did not look to me as though he would be harmed, but only the greatest nerve can save him."

"And that he possesses," Sue Turpin remarked.

"To a wonderful degree," said Marcelite.

"Yes, to a most remarkable degree," added Buffalo Bill, and he cast his eyes anxiously over toward the ridge.

At last Buffalo Bill walked out to where Kit Carrol was still on watch.

"What does it mean, chief?" eagerly asked the scout.

"I have always felt sure that Lieutenant Valdos knew as much about Indians as they did themselves, and now I am convinced of it, for he has gone among them to try his secret signs on them."

"If it was his brother, the outlaw, then he would rule the roost; but I don't know what hold Lieutenant Valdos has on them," said Kit.

"Nor I, but had he not felt that he did have power he would not have gone, but he is plucky and took the chances."

"You bet he did."

"You saw his advance better from here than we did."

"Yes."

"What did he do?"

"It struck me that he put something over him in front, face and all, and then waved his hands in a peculiar way."

"Yes, but the Indians did not appear hostile toward him?"

"Not in the least, as he went over the ridge."

"Well, Kit, keep your eyes open, and at the first

sign of trouble break for the camp, for they may come with a rush, you know."

"I'll be wideawake, chief," answered Kit Carrol, and Buffalo Bill walked back toward the camp.

"Well, Buffalo Bill, what does Scout Carrol say?" asked Marcelite as he came back and joined them.

"He is as much mystified as we all are, Miss Marcelite."

"It is certainly time the lieutenant should have returned," anxiously said Sue Turpin.

"Yes, though redskins are very deliberate in their councils, Miss Sue, and take a long time to decide what they will do, quick as they are in doing it, after their minds are made up."

"Ah! there he comes now," cried Marcelite, and as she spoke a group of horsemen were seen mounting the ridge.

"It is Lieutenant Valdos, and he is surrounded by Indians," said Buffalo Bill, and his voice rang out in a command to stand ready to resist an attack.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SACRIFICE.

The lieutenant was certainly coming back, but then he was accompanied by a dozen redskins, two of whom wore the feathered bonnets of chiefs.

They rode toward the rocks, where Kit Carrol was stationed, and, seeing this, Buffalo Bill moved out of the timber toward them, making the remark:

"They are coming for a powwow, Miss Marcelite, and, if necessary, to show a force of officers, the sergeant and corporal, yes, and two or three of the men, must be rigged up with shoulder-straps and all you can lay hands on to look like captains and lieutenants, and grouped where they can be seen. I will see what it means, for they are not nearer than the rocks."

"Be careful, Buffalo Bill, for we cannot lose you, too," said Marcelite.

"I don't wish to be lost, either," was the smiling reply, and Buffalo Bill continued on toward the rocks, where Kit Carrol still held his position.

The party of redskins, with the lieutenant in their midst, halted within revolver range of the rocks, and Adrian Valdos called out:

"Ho, Carrol, tell Buffalo Bill to come here—ah! there he is now."

Buffalo Bill advanced quickly to the rocks, halted

there an instant for a word with Kit Carrol, and then boldly advanced beyond, his repeating rifle across his arm.

"Buffalo Bill, you speak Spanish, I believe?" called out the lieutenant.

"Yes, sir, after a fashion."

"I will speak to you in that language then at times, for I have an idea that several of these braves speak English fairly well.

"Yes, sir."

"I went among them with signs of peace, which they understood, and asked them to allow us to go on our way unmolested."

"But they refused?"

"They wish pay for it, and I have told them that they should have it, though they demand ten thousand dollars."

"Promise them a million, sir," said Buffalo Bill, quickly.

"Yes, but it has to be paid, and yet I will pay it, as I am able to do upon my return to the fort."

"But now, sir?"

"That is the question, for they demand that I remain with them as a hostage until the amount is paid, for they have a renegade white chief among them, and it is his doing."

"I see, sir; I thought as much."

"He demands that the sum be brought, within thirty days, to the Canfield battlefield, where I joined you, and they give their pledge not to harm the bearer, but to put me to death if a force comes."

"They'll do it, too."

"Yes, the renegade chief wishes to kill me now, but they, having honored my signs of peace, will not allow it, so there is nothing to be done but to go on to the mines, and, returning to the fort, send out the money, which, tell Colonel Monastery, I will refund. I will be then set free; but I wish you to send out now my pack horse, and you can then go on your way unmolested as soon as we depart, for I will get them away first, so as not to reveal your small force."

"I don't half like this sacrifice on your part, Lieutenant Valdos."

"Don't mind that, Bill, old pard, for I do not."

"If those ladies were not along I'd fight it out, once I could get you back in the lines again."

"It would be madness, for there are two hundred and fifty of them, and they are enraged now at the losses we inflicted upon them. You must do as they

ay, so go back and get my pack horse, rifle and belt of arms."

"I can but obey, sir, but I do not like the sacrifice you are making at all, sir."

"Don't mind me, for I am at home among the Indians; but go, now, so as to delay no longer and not let them change their minds."

The scout shook his head ominously, but at once turned and walked back to the rocks, where stood Kit Carrol, who, also understanding Spanish, learned during his scouting life along the Rio Grande, had heard all.

Back to the camp went Buffalo Bill, and as he was met by Marcelite and Sue he said:

"We are all right, but the lieutenant must run the risk, for it is a case of a renegade white chief of the Indians, who demands ten thousand dollars, and he must remain until it is paid."

"Then return to Fort Blank at once, for my father will gladly pay it," said Marcelite.

"No, go on to the mines, and my father will pay," generously remarked Sue.

"No, the lieutenant has the money, or can get it, she says, though of course, he will not be allowed to pay it all, and I am to go back to the fort after taking you ladies to the mines, and meet a messenger at the Canfield battlefield and pay over the cash. I have thirty days in which to do it."

"This is a shame, and to think of the sacrifice Lieutenant Valdós makes," said Marcelite.

"It is better than to sacrifice us all, Miss Marcelite, and I rather like the terms, except for his captivity, though I do not believe they will harm him."

"We can only agree to the demand then?"

"Yes, Miss Marcelite, and I will lose no time."

"Convey our deepest gratitude to Lieutenant Valdós, and tell him how we all appreciate his noble sacrifice," said Marcelite, and soon after Buffalo Bill left the camp, leading after him the pack horse.

Buffalo Bill's face was very pale and stern, as he walked back toward the outpost, leading the pack horse of Lieutenant Valdós.

He was agreeing to terms he was forced to, having no alternative; but could he have gotten hold of Lieutenant Valdós again, nothing could have forced him to yield, for he would have fought to the death rather.

He went past Kit Carrol with the remark:

"Keep your eyes open for treachery, for it may be a game of trick after all with those redskins."

"Yes, chief, and if they make a break, the first to go under will be those two chiefs on the spotted ponies," was Kit's response.

The group of Indians had sat silently upon their ponies, while Buffalo Bill had gone after the pack horse, and Kit had not heard them utter a word, nor had the officer spoken.

He was in full view of Kit Carrol, sat with one foot thrown over the horn of his saddle, and his face was unmoved by the danger he was in, the sacrifice he was making for others.

When the chief of scouts was seen approaching again, the Indians uttered a few low tones, for they beheld the pack horse.

It was evident that they feared the two dummy guns, and felt that the soldiers were nearly one-third their own force, at least.

"I am back again, Lieutenant Valdós, having obeyed your orders, sir," said Buffalo Bill, halting some hundred feet from the group.

"All right, Buffalo Bill."

"In thirty days send the money to the place appointed, and I'll be a free man once more," said the officer, cheerily.

"Will you come forward and get the horse, sir?"

"No; I'll ask one of these chiefs to do so."

He turned and addressed one of the chiefs, speaking now in English, and the one he spoke to rode toward Buffalo Bill, yet very cautiously.

The scout handed him the rifle and belt of arms, placed the lead-line in his hands and remarked:

"I'd just like to raise your scalp, redskin."

That he believed so, the chief showed by not delaying an instant, and Buffalo Bill called out:

"I'll be on hand with the dust, lieutenant, and the young ladies wish me to say they more than appreciate your sacrifice, as all of us do, sir."

"Present them my regards and thanks. Now, good-by, old pard, and if I should go under, I know you will have a scalping tournament to avenge me. *Adios amigo*," and, with a wave of his hat, the lieutenant turned and rode away, surrounded by the Indians.

Buffalo Bill watched them until they went out of sight over the ridge, and then, with Kit Carrol, started back to the camp.

"A brave man that, Kit."

"You bet, and I guess I'll get to liking him, chief, as soon as I cease to regard him in the light I always held his brother."

"It is a most marvelous resemblance, surely; but I believe we are safe now, so we will push on for Moonlight Mine to prevent the temptation of treachery."

"Yes, but the lieutenant said after they had gone."

"Yes, that is so, and we can see them if they pull out."

"They are doing that now," said Kit, turning as they reached the timber.

"You are right," was Buffalo Bill's reply, as he gazed about the horizon and saw that the Indians were really raising the siege, or at least appearing to do so.

They had crossed the ford early in the morning, and had been seen taking up positions in every direction around the clump of timber on the distant ridges.

Now they were moving in single file toward a common point, the fort, and, watching their movements, Buffalo Bill counted them, to see that there was no treachery intended, for he had a slight dread that they might be leaving a small force behind them from each party that had taken up positions. It was noon when they at last disappeared, having joined forces, and the column of nearly three hundred warriors was seen slowly moving back toward the mountain range in the direction of Sentinel Pass.

In their midst the glasses had revealed at the head among the chiefs the form of Lieutenant Valdos, leading his pack horse. He was watched until the column looked like a large black snake winding its way over the plain.

Dinner having been disposed of, the party, now under the command of Buffalo Bill, mounted their horses and started once more upon the trail, though with saddened faces at the fate that might yet befall the brave officer who had offered himself as a sacrifice for their sake.

Having had a good rest, with plenty of grass and water, the horses moved briskly, their riders anxious to get beyond all chance of a change of mind on the part of the Indians as soon as possible. Before camp was pitched at nightfall, fully forty miles had been covered.

CHAPTER V.

MOONLIGHT MINING CAMP.

Moonlight Mining Camp was located in a wild spot in the mountains, just across the line of New Mexico.

It was in the midst of beautiful scenery, and the cliffs that overhung the camp had the appearance of being bathed in moonlight, hence the name given to it.

The camps extended for many miles from the "Moonlight Cliffs," and there were hundreds of miners within half-a-day's journey of what was known as "Mascot City," a bevy of camps in which saloons were more numerous than gold mines, and where there were several stores, a blacksmith shop, a stage office, for there was a coach running once a week to Santa Fe and back, and several scores of cabins.

It was in Moonlight Mines that Miner Hugh Turpin had struck it rich, having gone there three years before, accompanied by his little daughter, Sue, and in whose honor Mascot City had been named.

There was no more popular man in the mining country than Hugh Turpin when he went to the mines, and Sue but added to his popularity, and became the idol of the mines.

It was with deepest regret the miners had seen her depart for the East to be educated, feeling certain that she would forget all about them and Moonlight Mine.

Returning several years after to settle up his business in the mines, Hugh Turpin had shown himself the same good fellow he had always been, and though he had become a very rich man, he was not in the least spoiled by his successful ventures, but treated all his old chums with the same generous spirit that he had always shown when a poor miner.

As he would be compelled to remain much longer than he had anticipated, and the miners were wild to see "Little Sue, the Mascot of Moonlight Mine," Hugh Turpin had decided to have her come to him, especially as he knew how anxious she was to revisit the scenes of her girlhood, which she had loved so well.

In the old days she was wont to go dashing along the valleys at full speed upon her swift pony. She would hunt all day in the mountains, and always bring home game, and every miner had regarded her as his especial pet.

The camps had changed since those days, for many

ange faces were there, a number of new cabins had been built, other "finds" been made, and Mascot had added several hundreds more to its population.

Many miners had made fortunes and gone away, and new ones taking their places, Hugh Turpin had found that there were half the people there who knew him in name only.

When he decided to have Sue come there, the miners were delighted, and, holding a council, it was decided that they must do all in their power for her comfort.

Moonlight Valley was a cañon of picturesque beauty, and the end of it nearest the mountain was the sole property of Hugh Turpin.

Here, in a beautiful grove, bordering a swift-flowing stream, was the miner's cabin, a sunny little home of three rooms, and from which a grand view could be obtained.

But this would not do for the Mascot of Moonlight Valley, it was quickly decided, and, knocking off work at their mines, the men set to work to build a cabin that would be a home worthy of Sue.

Many hands make light work, and trees were soon cut down, the logs hewn and drawn to the hilltop, and a cabin of four rooms put up in front of the other one, while by voluntary gifts from the old friends of the Mascot, and the purchases of Hugh Turpin at the country stores, the new home was made most attractive and comfortable.

In the letters he had received from his daughter, Hugh Turpin had been told of her devotion to Marcelite, her schoolmate, and several times she had written him to the effect that she would dearly like to visit him and bring Marcelite Monastery with her, and the latter would gladly come if the opportunity offered.

It, therefore, struck Hugh Turpin that it was possible that Marcelite might accompany his daughter, and, to be on the safe side, he had in making his preparations, arranged for her also.

That there was great danger in the trip the miner did not believe, when Buffalo Bill was the guide and scout, and he had asked Colonel Monastery to kindly show his daughter an escort.

"Waal, Pard Turpin, yer is all ready fer yer daughter now, and ye c'u'dn' hev did more if she were a queen, and she's desarvin' of it; but we is all afeerd she has been a leetle spoilt in her notions, sence she

were our Mascot," said Ben Bronson, an old miner who had pegged industriously away for years in the mines, but still had his fortune to find.

"Wait and see her, Ben, and judge if she is not the same Sue you knew—ah! there comes a party on horseback far down the valley, and I am sure that Sue is coming, for they are soldiers," and at Hugh Turpin's words Ben Bronson gave a war-whoop of joy.

As the miners in Moonlight Valley were aware of the coming of Sue Turpin, all were awaiting her arrival with a keen anticipation of pleasure.

It was about the middle of the afternoon when Buffalo Bill, some hundred yards in the lead of his party, entered the gap that led in from the plains among the mountains in which were the various mining camps of Moonlight Valley.

The old familiar scenes came back to Sue Turpin with a flood of remembrance at the life she had led there when a girl just entering her teens, and she pointed out to Marcelite various points of interest that they came upon.

Halting for the others to come up, Buffalo Bill said:

"Well, Miss Sue, you are once more in your old training ground, so I am under your orders now."

"We will go right up to the old home, Mr. Cody, for there is a fine camping-place near for the soldiers," answered Sue, her face radiant with pleasure, and, as they moved on once more, she continued:

"There is Eagle Cliff Mine, Marcelite, and Hangman's Cañon, where so many poor fellows have met death, while you see Vigilante Rock is that black cliff ahead.

"That clump of trees you see up on the mountain side is called Sue's Folly, for I once risked my life to climb up there, and from the remembrance of that day I think it was properly named.

"Now we are going to turn into the valley, for yonder rise the Moonlight Cliffs," and Sue pointed out the line of cliffs that gave the valley and mines their name, and the sight of which caused Marcelite to exclaim:

"Oh, how beautiful! And how strange the effect!"

Just then several miners were seen, and, upon discovering the party, they dropped their tools and ran out to the trail, cheering as they waved their hats.

"The Mascot has come!"

"Welcome to the Mascot of Moonlight Mountains!" came the cry, and it rung through the valley, notifying the others of the arrival of Sue Turpin.

Crowds began to run toward the trail, and as the party rode along they were greeted with the wildest cheers of welcome.

Buffalo Bill was known to some of the miners, and he also came in for a welcoming cheer, as did Uncle Sam's Boys in Blue.

Sue returned the salutes by waving her hat, and yet now and then was forcibly halted and had to shake hands all around with a group more enthusiastic than the others.

"How is yer, Little Sue?"

"Hooray for ther Mascot!"

"Welcome home, leetle gal!"

"You bet we is glad ter see yer."

"Then her hain't forgot us, Miss Sue?"

"We is right down tickled ter see yer."

"And yer pretty pard thar is welcome."

And so on went the expressions of welcome, as Sue rode on up the valley with Buffalo Bill in the lead, Marcelite Monastery by her side, and the soldiers and others following in close order, all amused and pleased with the welcome the miner's daughter was receiving.

A few expressions made Sue and Marcelite laugh heartily, for one miner cried out:

"Ther sight o' you is good fer sore eyes," while another frankly confessed:

"I gits drunk in yer honor, Miss Sue, this very night."

The noisy welcome brought all the miners out along the trail up the valley, and cheering and hat waving, with a fusillade of revolver shots as a salute, continued until the party reached the cabin of Miner Turpin.

As she leaped from her saddle her father greeted Sue, and then gave a most cordial welcome to Marcelite, to whom he said:

"I hoped, yet scarcely dared believe, you would come."

"Oh, yes, I came along as guardian for Sue—I never in my life saw a girl with so many lovers, Mr. Turpin, as Sue has," responded Marcelite.

Buffalo Bill was also warmly welcomed by the miner, as were also the soldiers, who were directed

to a grove on the stream near by, where there was fine grass for their horses and wood for camp-fire.

The scout declined Mr. Turpin's invitation to come his guest in the cabin, saying that he would camp with the men, but take his meals at the cabin and he led the way to the camping-ground, while Sue said:

"Father, we owe everything to Buffalo Bill, no fellow that he is, for he has saved us from death, capture by the Indians, and the only thing that makes the pleasure of my coming is that we left Lieutenant Valdos as a hostage among the redskins."

"May I ask, my daughter, if it was the brave officer who passed through here with Buffalo Bill, his way to the fort, for I know his story, or brother's."

"It was Adrian Valdos, father, and a brave man, is, and he must not pay the amount of ransom which a renegade white man demanded, for you must pay and deduct it from my wedding present."

The miner laughed and asked:

"What, are you to be married, then, Sue?"

"Oh, no! no! I meant when I got the chance marry," cried Sue, blushing.

"You are worth to me all the ransom any renegade will demand, so it will be my pleasure to pay it," was the generous response, and he led the maidens into the cabin to show them all that the miners had done for their comfort, and said:

"They are as glad to see you, Sue, as though they were their own child, while all feel highly honored by Miss Monastery's coming with you."

CHAPTER VI.

THE DESPERADOES' "NEST."

Buffalo Bill knew that Lieutenant Valdos had secret orders from Colonel Monastery to remain some time in the mines, apparently to rest his cattle, but in reality to hunt for several deserters from the army who were suspected of being there, lured to desert in the hope of digging out fortunes, and also particularly to hunt down half-a-dozen or more desperadoes who had made themselves liable to the military law of the department.

Of course, in these still hunts Buffalo Bill was to be the real mover, but the orders had been given to the lieutenant in the presence of Marcelite, and upon the trail she had asked the scout if the officer had

made him acquainted with what he was expected to do in the matter.

A negative reply caused Marcelite to say: "I suppose that he intended to tell you later; but, as he is a prisoner now, and I heard it all, I will tell you what it was, and I can even give you the names of the deserters and the desperadoes referred to.

"I tell you this, as I deem it my duty, for I know my father expected more of this expedition than that it should be an escort party merely, and, but for the fact that Lieutenant Valdos had instructions for you, we would have given them to you personally, so if you carry out his wishes, it will be a service that will be appreciated, and win fame for you as well."

"I thank you most kindly, Miss Marcelite, and will receive my orders from you the same as from Lieutenant Valdos, who, doubtless, forgot to tell me, or could not do so, when captured," answered the scout.

This conversation occurred upon the trail, and when the party had arrived safely at the miner's home, Marcelite sought, the next morning after breakfast, an interview with the scout, at which Mr. Turpin and Sue were also present.

"Mr. Cody and I had some talk over a matter on the trail, which I happen to know Lieutenant Valdos had orders to ferret out, Mr. Turpin, and I wish you to hear what it was," said Marcelite.

She then went on to explain just what the instructions were that were given Lieutenant Valdos by her father, and added:

"Knowing the miners as you do, sir, you may be able to put Mr. Cody upon the right track, for I have written down the names of the deserters.

"Here also are the names, as given by my father, of several noted lawless men and desperadoes."

And she handed over the list, which Buffalo Bill read aloud.

There were the names of five deserters, with the regiments they belonged to, and a description of the men and the time of desertions. The next list of names Buffalo Bill read as follows:

"Mephisto Mike, charged with several murders, and being an all-round bad man.

"Red-Hand Romeo, a dandy of the frontier, always quoting Shakespeare; his left hand reddened by a birthmark extending to the wrist. Is left-handed, a dead shot, is wanted for numerous murders, while there is a price offered for him, dead or alive, by the Governor of California."

Then followed the names of several who belonged to a band of desperadoes known as the "Outlaw Owls." This list ended with:

"Dick Dash, the Desperado Duelist, a gambler who always seeks personal difficulties, and is a dead shot, defying justice and right—the most dangerous man in the mining country, and one who is the mortal foe of soldiers."

"They are a sad lot, and the mines will be the better for their removal, for they are suspected of crimes that cannot be proven on them here. I can point the desperadoes out to you, Bill, but am not sure of the soldier deserters," said Mr. Turpin.

"No, it will only get you into trouble, sir, and I can pick them up by degrees in a quiet way.

"I have heard of the Owls, and also of Mephisto Mike, Red-Hand Romeo, and Dick Dash I know, for we have a little debt to settle between us. He killed Scout Sykes, a dear pard of mine."

"I am sorry to be the one to put you upon a red trail, and one that must prove fatal to some," said Marcelite; "but then I know how anxious my father is to put down this lawless element, and he feels that with the picked soldiers sent along, and Lieutenant Valdos and yourself, he has the very ones to strike a blow that will be felt, and which the commanding general has been urging."

"I shall be glad to go upon the trail, Miss Monastery, a red one though it may be, and do my duty as I understand it, and I know that in the sergeant and his men I have the best of allies," answered Buffalo Bill, and he added:

"I'll take in the city to-night for pointers."

Finding themselves most comfortably located, enjoying the serenade of the miners given them during the night, and their warm welcome, with unsurpassed scenery about them, and a fascination in the wild life of a mining camp, both Marcelite and Sue were glad that they had come, and were determined to enjoy their stay, though they could not but dread that there was great danger to Buffalo Bill in the red trail he was to start upon that night.

Buffalo Bill was a man of the calmest demeanor even when aroused.

He was in no sense of the word a bravado, and though many stories had gone the rounds concerning his personal difficulties, some told by those who should have known better, he was not a man to seek trouble, but rather to avoid it.

When brought face to face with an encounter that must prove fatal, he never shrank from death, but met a foe as a brave man should; always taking great chances, rather than be thought of as taking an advantage.

A man of herculean strength, quick in his movements, cool and determined, he was a most dangerous adversary to meet, and when in the discharge of his duty shrank from no danger, however great.

A better man to have gone upon the desperado-hunting mission could not have been found, and Colonel Monastery was glad to have such a cool and daring person as Buffalo Bill in command in the hazardous work of running down deserters and outlaws, while the sergeant, corporal and the men had been picked for their courage, coolness and ability—the ablest aides possible to their leader.

Having “done themselves proud,” as they expressed it, in their welcome to Sue Turpin and her guest, the miners wished to taper off their enthusiasm with a little spree, and the second night the saloons were more than usually crowded, while the gambling-tables were well filled.

The presence of Buffalo Bill and the soldiers camped in the valley had a depressing effect upon quite a number of miners who loved lawlessness, and who were only a detriment to the good of the country.

Men branded with crime had no love for keepers of the law, and those were the ones depressed by the presence of the noted bordermen and the soldiers.

Why they did not at once start back upon their trail to the fort they could not understand.

They had done their duty as an escort, so let them return, they argued.

Then came the rumor that they were to remain until the miner Turpin left, and escort him, his daughter and their fair guest back to the fort, for it was whispered that the miner would carry back with him a very large sum in gold dust.

Unmindful of what was said, Buffalo Bill rode through the camps, apparently greatly interested.

He enjoyed chats with several miners, and when night came, wended his way on foot with Sergeant Dean to Mascot City.

They dropped casually in at the different gambling saloons, and at each one Buffalo Bill played a few games of chance, without any good fortune attending him.

He was asked to play by several men who made gambling their trade, but said he would be glad to do so some other night, but he was only trying his luck then with small sums.

It was late, however, when he walked back to camp with the sergeant.

As they got clear of the cabins, Buffalo Bill said

“Well, sergeant, what luck?”

“I picked out three, sir.”

“And I two.”

“Let us see if we hit upon the same men.”

“Mine were all infantrymen, sir.”

“Good! One of mine was a cavalryman, the other belonged to the artillery, so that makes the very fit the colonel wanted.”

“Yes, sir.”

“You don’t think they suspected you?”

“They knew me, sir, but they felt safe in the change of appearance, for a full beard, long hair and a miner’s dress, with a couple of more years added to their lives, makes a great change from a smooth-shaven, short-haired soldier in uniform.”

“You are sure of your men, then?”

“I am, sir, for I remembered them perfectly, and had what proof I needed.”

“And I am sure of mine, for they deserted from McPherson, and were bad men.”

“Now, to get hold of them.”

“It will raise a row, sir.”

“Oh, of course, there will be pards to take up for them, but that don’t scare me. I wish to be safe though, so as to get the whole five at one haul, so we must decoy them.”

“How can we?”

“I’ll tell Miner Turpin who they are, and find out from him what fellow I can get as a decoy duck to get the five of them together at a certain place where we can capture the outfit.”

“A good idea, sir,” and the sergeant seemed pleased at the prospect.

When he went to breakfast at the cabin in the morning Buffalo Bill told Miner Turpin just who the deserters were, for he had gotten the names that each was known by. Mr. Turpin at once said that though they were gold diggers, they had bad names in the mines, and he knew one man, who, for pay, would entrap them in some way.

This man Buffalo Bill at once went in search of and found him taking his “eye-opener” at the bar.

"Drink with me, pard," he said, and cigars followed at the scout's expense also, after which the two had a little game of cards together, in which Hank Hall, as he was called, won a little money.

The game, with a couple of more drinks, made the two apparently good friends, and Buffalo Bill said:

"You have a lead, I believe?"

"Yas, pard, it's up beyond your camp, but it pans out so trifling, I has ter do other work fer a honest in'."

"See here, do you really wish to do some honest work?"

"Try me."

"I will give you some dust, and you can put it in your mine, as though you found it there."

"Then go and ask five men I will give you the names of to come there and see it."

"Yer is after lassoing somebody?"

"Yes."

"Maybe I'll git bored."

"No, I'll lasso you, too, as you call it, to prevent your being suspected, and have others afterward to prove you are not the man I want, so will let you go."

"Good! What's ther job worth to yer, pard?"

"Just one hundred dollars."

"I'll do it. Who is yer game?"

"I'll tell you, and you can have your men there at four o'clock this afternoon."

"I'll go yer," was the emphatic response.

It was just four o'clock when five rough-looking men passed up by Miner Turpin's house and halted under the cliff half-a-mile beyond, at a spot where some work had been done on a gold find.

This was up a narrow cañon in the cliff, and there stood Hank Hall to welcome them.

"I tell yer, pards, I have struck it rich I knows, so I'll sell out quick and make no noise about it, as I don't like those soldiers in ther valley, for all ther while I has cold chills chasin' each other up and down the back, fearin' I is wanted, yer see, so I'll sell up and git out o' here on ther jump."

Here are ther yellow dirt jist as I find it, when I truck my pick in thar, so make me a bid, and when t'others come I has axed, I'll let her go to them who wants it most and has ther cash down ter pay."

Such was Hank Hall's little introductory to the

sale of his mine under the pretense of having that morning unearthed quite a rich find of gold.

The men looked at the dirt and one grumbled:

"If it holds at this, it's rich dirt, Hank, but I hain't got much cash ter give."

"Me nuther, though I kin rake up a leetle."

"Me, too, for I keeps a few hundreds handy about me."

"I'll chip in with some also."

"Count me one-fifth buyer," said the last of the five.

"That's the talk, and it's why I asked the five of you, as I knowed yer allers had cash."

"Now, I could sell to Miner Turpin mighty quick, only I thought I'd give poor men a chance."

"I tried it on ther sergeant of ther soldier outfit, but he said he wasn't buyin', but would tell Buffalo Bill, and maybe he had some cash ter spend—there they comes now."

"But we takes yer mine, so call it sold, for we hain't lingerin' here to powwow jist now."

"Durn 'em; what did yer tell them hawks fer?" exclaimed one, and the five men looked uneasy and were turning to go, just as Buffalo Bill and Sergeant Dean came into the narrow cañon.

"Hold on, gentlemen, don't be in a hurry, for it's my treat——"

"Hands up, all of you!"

The scout's two revolvers, one in each hand, were leveled at the men, and each one of the five seemed to feel that the muzzles pointed directly into his face.

They were all armed, quick to draw, and were bad men when they held the advantage, but they stood now so that not one could take refuge behind the other, a movement of a hand would be a signal for a death-shot, and the scout's deadly aim was well known, as well as the fact that he was not one to count odds.

It seemed also that Hank Hall was wanted, as well, for he had quickly raised his hands at the stern command of Buffalo Bill.

"What ther devil does yer mean?" growled one of the men, yet he had his hands raised over his head.

"I'll explain later."

"Sergeant, present those six gentlemen with a pair of your extra fine steel bracelets, with snap locks."

The sergeant also had his revolvers drawn, but, replacing one in his holster, he took from his pocket

six pairs of steel manacles, and stepped up in front of the nearest man.

"Pards, must we put up with this?" asked one.

"It is lead or steel—take your choice," said Buffalo Bill, and the men shuddered at his words, and click of the spring as it snapped upon the hands of the man the sergeant had put the manacles upon first.

"Don't be fools, pards, for our friends will soon set us free," said one of the men, and he held out his hands for the manacles.

"That's so," said another, cheerfully, and the others were quickly ironed and disarmed, Hank Hall among the rest, and who seemed to take it most to heart, judging by his actions.

"What has we done, pard?" he whined.

"I arrest you as deserters from the United States army," was the reply.

Instantly the face of Hall brightened, while he said:

"Then I hain't in it, pard, for I never were a sojer in my life."

"No more was I," growled one of the others.

"No doubt you are all innocent; but I happen to believe I have the right men, and when you get to the fort and meet your old comrades there, then you will be able to prove whether you deserted or not.

"Now, sergeant, march these men off to the camp, and keep them under guard."

The sergeant at once ranged them in line, slung their belts of arms over his arm and started off.

As they came out of the valley there was some low whispering among them, for they caught sight of several miners, and one of the men broke out in a wild cry:

"Ho, pards, ther blue-coats has got us.

"To ther rescue, comrades!"

The cry rang loudly down the valley and reached many ears, for a dozen men at once appeared in sight.

"Repeat that cry any one of you, and I'll send a bullet through your heart," sternly said the scout, as he came rapidly after the prisoners, and seeing that the call was being responded to he continued:

"Come, double-quick, march!"

CHAPTER VII.

A DUEL TO THE DEATH.

The miners who had heard the cry of one of the deserters saw the cause as they looked at the six men marching along in charge of the sergeant and Buffalo Bill.

Who these men were they did not know at a glance, but the call was for help, and, shouting others to follow, they came at a run toward the scene.

It was a quarter-of-a-mile to the military camp, and from its position it was not in sight. Buffalo Bill had made a clever capture of his prisoners, and was anxious to get them under the protection of the soldiers, so gave the order to double-quick.

The men at once came to a standstill, refusing to move, but the scout drew his bowie-knife, sprung behind the rear man, and, pressing the point against his back, ordered:

"Now, double-quick, march!"

"For God's sake, boys, obey, for the knife is cutting into my back," cried the man threatened with the bowie, though the point had not touched his flesh.

Thus urged, the men obeyed, and went off at steady double-quick, which only training could have accomplished, all except Hank Hall, who could not keep the step.

He was at once dragged out of his place, and placed in the rear, with the remark of the sergeant:

"He never was a soldier, sir."

"I believe you are right, sergeant; but there comes the rescuers."

"Halt!"

The halt was made, and up dashed a man of almost giant size, with a red, evil face.

"Hold on there, pard, you is a trifle previous," he shouted.

"I know my duty, sir. These are deserters from the army, and I have arrested them," was Buffalo Bill's reply.

"And I know my pards, and that means I says there is miners, and you can't come no grab game on them and me."

"Do you intend to interfere?"

"I does."

"Better think better of it, and not do so."

"I'm a-goin' ter set them men free—hain't w no pards?"

He turned toward the score of men now gathered here, and saw with pleasure others quickly coming upon the scene.

At his question a number of voices answered in the affirmative.

"Gentlemen, I am in discharge of my duty as a government officer, and I warn you to keep hands off," said Buffalo Bill. "These men are deserters, and if they can prove that they are not, that will set them free."

"I says they goes free now, and what I says goes," the big man remarked, while one of the crowd said:

"Better let 'em go, Buffalo Bill, for that is Hercules Harry, and he is no man to fool with."

"Thank you for your advice, friend, but if Hercules Harry wants these men he'll have to fight for 'em," was Bill's quiet rejoinder.

"Is that yer game?" roared the big fellow, savagely.

"I seek no trouble, but if you attempt to rescue these men, why you and I will come together, that is all."

Buffalo Bill kept his eye upon the big fellow, for he could see that he was a dangerous man, and he was ready for any move upon his part.

It was well he was watching him, for the Hercules suddenly dropped his hand upon his revolver, yet before he could show it the scout had him covered.

"Don't do it, for you love life, I know," said Bill, in the calmest tones possible.

"I do love life too well ter throw it away," said Hercules Harry, "and yer is quicker than greased lightning, but I come here ter set them men free, and, says I, if yer wants 'em, fight for 'em."

"I will, if I am forced to do so!"

"Will you have it out with me squar'?"

"Do you mean that I am to fight you a duel?"

"Just that."

"I have no quarrel with you, and I seek none. I am in the discharge of my duty, so I warn you off," said Buffalo Bill.

"Then yer backs down?"

"I fear no bully such as you are, so stand aside, for I pass on with my prisoners."

Buffalo Bill stepped toward the man as he spoke, still holding him covered.

The Hercules did not move, did not dare drop his hand upon his revolver.

The scout reached him, and then, with a rapid

movement, which even the quickest eye was unable to follow, he had dealt the bully a blow in the face with one hand, while with one foot he tripped him, hurling him to the ground with a force that half stunned him.

The spectators could not believe their eyes at seeing their Hercules thus easily done for, and they gazed at Buffalo Bill in wonder, while he said:

"Now, sergeant, we will move on."

"No, you don't!" roared the fallen man, staggering to his feet, revolver now in hand, and firing as he bounded forward.

With a shriek of pain, Hank Hall fell dead in his tracks, for he stood just behind the scout, and mingling with his cry was the sharp report of a second shot.

This time it was Buffalo Bill who fired, and his aim was true as ever, for his bullet crashed in between the eyes of Hercules Harry, who fell his length at the scout's feet, a dead man.

"I hope this killing will have to go no further," said Buffalo Bill, as he glanced over the crowd, many of whom were now beginning to show a very ugly spirit toward him.

"It's got ter go further, Buffalo Bill, for no man sha'n't come inter this mining camp, arrest our comrades and kill a pard of mine, and I not hold him responsible."

The speaker was a small, wiry man, dressed in top-boots, and a suit of black clothes.

A glance showed Buffalo Bill that the man must be Mephisto Mike, for he looked like the man described to him as bearing that name.

He did not wish more bloodshed, but was not a man to be driven from his duty, though he saw now that a number of the crowd were ready to back the man.

"See here, pard, don't be a fool, for the fool-killer is around to-day, and you don't wish to be singled out by him."

"Is you the fool-killer yer speaks of?"

"If I have to kill you, yes, for you are chipping in where it is not your game."

"I chips in when I sees fit to do so, and ef yer has killed Hercules Harry, I hain't afeered of you."

"Well, play your hand, for life's too short to fool away time."

"Will yer set them men free?"

"Not in a thousand years."

"I'll play yer a game for 'em."

"Then step out of the crowd and draw."

"I mean with cards."

"And I mean with revolvers, for sixes are trumps, and I hold a full hand."

"Do you pass?"

Mephisto Mike saw that the laugh was upon him.

He had challenged for a game, and the scout had taken him up, but with revolvers instead of cards.

His look over the crowd showed that he must make a bold stand or lose his prestige.

The fate of Hercules Harry had cowed many into submitting to the will of the scout, and they were surprised when Mephisto Mike had chipped in, game as he was known to be.

Now it looked as though he would stand a bluff.

But Mephisto Mike was a man with unbounded confidence in himself, and he would not back down before men who had always feared him; so he said:

"I don't pass, but orders you to let them men go."

"And I refuse, while, to give you a hole to sneak out of, I warn you that you are interfering with a government officer in the discharge of his duty."

"What does yer arrest them for?"

"As deserters from the army."

"Has yer ther proof?"

"I have."

"Show it to me."

"I recognize these two men, and Sergeant Dean knows those three."

"What does they say?"

"We denies it," came in chorus from the five men.

"I take their word."

"Well, what are you going to do about it, Mickey?"

"Pards, are you with me?" and Mephisto Mike glanced over the crowd.

There were fully a hundred men in the crowd now, and, though some of them felt that Mephisto Mike was weakening in calling for aid from the crowd, yet a number were determined to stand by him.

There were others present, the law-abiding men, in the crowd, who wanted to back up the scout.

They felt that in the loss of Hercules Harry the camps had suffered no misfortune, that Hank Hall would be missed by no one, and that it had been a lucky thing that he had been in the way of the bully's bullet aimed at Buffalo Bill.

If Mephisto Mike was killed by the scout no crepe

in token of respectful regrets would be hung to the latch strings of any of the cabins, but instead they would have been a fervent delivery of thanks that another brave had passed in his chips.

But, seeing that in that particular crowd the worst element predominated, the better class of men kept in the background. It seemed to them that Buffalo Bill had developed a remarkable capability of taking care of himself.

Mephisto Mike's question had to be answered, for he had glanced around the crowd, his eye falling upon those whom he knew would hardly dare decline—some of them would respond from sheer love of seeing more killing, others from fear of being held to account by the desperado if he escaped death.

"I says, pards, is yer with me in pertecting our friends?" repeated Mephisto Mike, in a louder and more threatening tone.

A chorus of voices answered in the affirmative, and the crowd came closer.

But Buffalo Bill's face did not change in expression, unless it was that a grim smile hovered about his mouth, and his voice was firm and distinct, as he said:

"You make a mistake, gentlemen, for I have the right to arrest these men, and I shall shoot to kill if I am driven to it."

"We kin shoot to kill, too, Buffalo Bill, and Mephisto Mike says so," yelled the crowd.

That another moment would have brought on a deadly encounter all knew, for Buffalo Bill's face now showed the spirit of a man determined to do and die right there, and the crowd wavered to give way for those who meant to engage in the deadly conflict.

But as they wavered, into their midst glided a slender form, and the clear voice of a woman cried:

"Cowards! do you dare fire on me, too, for I take sides with Buffalo Bill?"

It was Sue Turpin, the Mascot of Moonlight Mine, that spoke, and hardly had she uttered the words when Marcelite Monastery glided up to the other side of Buffalo Bill. Both girls had repeating rifles in their hands ready for use.

Sue Turpin and Marcelite had just come in from a hunt down the valley and in the mountains, and the negro cook was taking the game they had brought back with them, when he said:

"I think somethin' is goin' wrong up the valley with Mr. Bill, Miss Sue."

"Why, what is it?" and Sue gazed up the valley, where the crowd surrounding Buffalo Bill and his prisoners were in sight.

"Come, Marcelite, for Mr. Cody is surely in some trouble there," she cried, and, turning to the negro, she continued:

"Run down to the troopers' camp and tell them to mount quickly and come on up the valley.

"Come, Marcelite," and the two girls dashed away at the full speed of their horses.

They were compelled to leave their horses before reaching the spot, on account of the uneven nature of the ground, and Sue said, as she threw her rein to her friend:

"Here, Marcelite, you wait here, please, for I'll stop that trouble!"

She glided forward as she spoke, overheard the words, saw the situation at a glance, and appeared on the scene, her presence unsuspected until she reached the crowd, rifle in hand, as she placed herself on the side of the scout.

The coming of the two ladies in the way they did caused a surprise like the fall of a bombshell among the miners, and every atom of fight was taken out of them.

The lawful men of the crowd greeted them with a cheering cheer, which was soon joined in by the miners.

As for Mephisto Mike, he was glad to see a chance of escape, though Sue evidently recognized him as the leader, and her eyes flashed defiance upon him.

Thinking that he now saw his chance to get out of the bad scrape with some degree of honor, he said:

"We cannot go against you, Miss Sue, so passes."

"You are wise; but what did this attack mean? It has not been a bloodless one, I see," and Sue glanced at the dead bodies of the unfortunate Hank Hall and Hercules Harry.

"It means that I arrested these deserters from the army, Miss Sue," said the scout, "acting under orders, and that the men now dead sought to rescue them, while Mephisto Mike, not profiting by their experience, still pressed me. He should thank you for saving his life, for, had you not come, he would have been a dead man now, though I, too, might have been under, so you have done me a great service, Miss Sue."

"Well, there will be no more trouble, for here come the soldiers, and my father is with them, I see.

Mephisto Mike, you make a great mistake to bully a government officer."

"Beg pardon, Miss Sue, but I didn't want to see the boys taken off to be hung, maybe."

"It is about all you can do to take care of your own neck," was Sue's retort.

Just then up came Miner Turpin, with the soldiers at his back, the corporal by his side, for they had dismounted from their horses.

"Men, if you are not satisfied, if these ladies will retire, we can settle the question of my right to arrest deserters right now," said Buffalo Bill, facing the crowd.

"Who disputes your right, Buffalo Bill?" cried Miner Turpin, hotly.

"It seems no one now, sir, for Miss Sue and Miss Marcelite have stampeded the fighters," was the answer of Buffalo Bill, and he laughed as he saw Mephisto Mike and his immediate backers getting out of view behind the now thickly gathering crowd.

Miner Turpin was a power in Moonlight Valley, and his coming had a quieting effect, equaled only by the arrival of Sue and Marcelite, and the presence of the soldiers also poured oil upon the troubled waters for the majority, no matter what a few hotheads might wish to do.

"Take your prisoners to camp, sergeant, and keep two men on duty constantly—one over these five men, the other to watch the camp.

"I will walk back with Miner Turpin as soon as I have arranged for the burial of these bodies," said Buffalo Bill.

"Leave that to Vaughan, Bill, for he will see to it, won't you, Vaughan?" said Miner Turpin, addressing one of the men, who answered:

"Oh, yes, sir, I'll see 'em planted o. k., but, sergeant, you'd better unchain Hank Hall now, for he'll not get away," and the sergeant quickly removed the handcuffs from the dead man.

"You have done the camps a great service, Buffalo Bill, in killing Hercules Harry, while few will mourn for Hank Hall, for he was a bad one; but how did it all happen?" said Miner Turpin, as they walked along back to the cabins, accompanied by the two maidens, one of the soldiers leading their horses.

Buffalo Bill told the story of the affair in his modest way, and the miner said:

"Let me warn you to look out for Mephisto Mike, for he will strike you in the back, if he can.

"He is one of the desperadoes on your list, and Hercules Harry was another, for he was the leader of the Owls, and Hank Hall was one of his gang, so you have done a fair day's work, I think; but look out for Mephisto Mike, for he is a bad one, and I heard several say you backed him down squarely, and that means he will seek revenge."

CHAPTER VIII.

A CHALLENGE ACCEPTED.

Marcelite Monastery felt blue over the outcome of her having told Buffalo Bill what her father's orders had been to Lieutenant Valdós. It had already resulted in the death of two men.

Being the daughter of the commandant, however, and frequently aiding him in his work, answering letters and dispatches, she had learned much of what duties he was expected to perform. For years it had been the desire of the government to check desertion, when the temptation of the mines was at hand, especially as the men who deserted were the worst element in the army and became outlaws almost invariably.

Marcelite knew, too, that there was a renegade element among the Indians that the commanders were anxious to lay a violent hand upon, as they urged the hostiles on to greater deeds of devilry than they would otherwise be guilty of.

The desperadoes of the mining camps and settlements were also another bad lot, so that Marcelite, having heard her father's talk and instructions to Lieutenant Valdós, felt justified in telling Buffalo Bill what that officer had expected to accomplish on his visit to Moonlight Valley, the going with troops as an escort being the nominal work for which they were sent there.

The miner told Marcelite, as did also Sue and Buffalo Bill, that she had only done her duty in telling the latter what had been the orders of Lieutenant Valdós, as that officer had not been able to inform the scout, and hence she should not feel blue over the fatal results.

The scout had said to her, in his quiet way:

"You don't know what precious lives you may have saved through my putting Hercules Harry out of the way, for he has a long list already to answer for, and if he killed Hank Hall with a stray shot, from

all accounts, it was a good deed, to get rid of him too.

"Now you know, Miss Marcelite, that we men on the border have to carry our lives in our hands, and in the discharge of duty must take big chances, being killed, and stand ready to kill, too, though wanton killing is to me the basest of crimes.

"Let a man kill a few desperadoes in the discharge of his duty and to save his own life or the lives of others, and before long he is branded as a man-killer—a name that no one who has a true heart cares to bear. Like the official executioner, he must stand ready to take life when the occasion demands it."

"You are right, Bill, and your argument is a good one, for you have been one to suffer by just such reports," said Hugh Turpin.

"Yes, and will have to do the same thing again and again, as long as I lead this wild life," said Buffalo Bill, in a tone of extreme sadness; but in an instant his manner changed, and he added:

"No, no, Miss Marcelite, don't you feel blue over the death of any man whom your telling me my orders caused me to kill, and who was, really speaking, tree fruit, from the crimes he was guilty of.

"Now I must go up to the city and look around."

"You will take some of your soldiers with you," asked Sue.

"Oh, no, miss, for that would surely cause trouble as it would be said that I was afraid to go alone, and was looking for a fracas.

"Why, they'd doubtless tell me to come and get you and Miss Marcelite to protect me," and the scout smiled, while Miner Turpin said:

"You are right, Bill, it would cause trouble to take your men, for there is a very ugly element at these mines, and this afternoon's arrest has started the fire."

Buffalo Bill soon after left the cabin and went on his way on foot up to Mascot City.

The "city" was in full blast, for the occurrences of the afternoon had caused all the miners to assemble in the various saloons, at the Stagecoach tavern and in knots, discussing the affair.

The discussions, fired by liquor, ran hot, and when Buffalo Bill dropped into "The Exchange," as the main gambling and drinking saloon was known, he found that there had already occurred one killing scrape and another in which a participant had been badly wounded.

The "hero" in each case was Mephisto Mike, and was enjoying a game of cards when Buffalo Bill entered into the saloon.

Flushed with his deeds, and half-full of liquor, the moment his eyes fell upon the scout he dropped his cards and called out, in a voice that silenced all noise:

"Ho, Buffalo Bill, you have come to have out your barrel with me, I suppose?"

"I have no quarrel with you, unless you see fit to make one," was the calm reply.

"Well, I do see fit to demand an apology for your insulting me this afternoon, or give me satisfaction."

"I have no apology to offer, but all the satisfaction you may desire."

The trouble which had ended in Mephisto Mike killing one man and wounding another, had originated in the fact that several miners had criticised his interfering with the arrest of the deserters.

They upheld the scout, and said that he had done it right in killing Hercules Harry, and added that for Sue Turpin's timely arrival, the scout would have killed Mephisto Mike.

The moment he beheld the tall form and handsome, stern and cynical face of Buffalo Bill, it aroused the Satan in his nature, and he had hurled down a challenge for an apology or a fight.

When Buffalo Bill entered, every eye was upon him, and many drew a long breath, for they felt that their tragedy was to be enacted.

"Why had not the scout stayed away?" some asked.

"Yet, why should he hide himself in a free country, if it was he not entitled to go where he pleased?"

The truth was, Buffalo Bill had gone in the discharge of his duty.

He was on the trail of the desperadoes Lieutenant Pecos had been given orders to hunt down.

He wished to find them, to spot them, to track them, so that when the time came to act, he could do so.

As the crowd became breathless with expectation, Buffalo Bill replied to the challenge of Mephisto Mike, and all eyes were upon him and the desperado.

The latter at once attempted to draw his revolver, but he was covered with a quickness that brought a cheer from the crowd.

Now Buffalo Bill did it, no one saw or knew, but Mephisto Mike had a revolver leveled at his head in

a twinkling of a second, while the scout called out, sternly:

"Hold! no game of life and death here in this crowd, for, like Hercules Harry, another cowardly bully of your stripe, you will wound or kill an innocent man."

Cheers greeted this announcement, and Mephisto Mike turned livid with rage, while he said, fiercely:

"You said you would meet me, and now back down because you have the drop on me."

"You are a liar, for I do not back down, but say that if you wish to meet me it must be fair and square, so choose your seconds, and, as I have no friend here, I must ask a kindness on the part of some one."

Another cheer greeted the words of the scout, and it was very evident that Buffalo Bill's stock was rapidly rising above par.

Cornered as he was, by his challenge, and its prompt acceptance, Mephisto Mike called out:

"Drop your revolver from covering me, and I'll talk to you."

"Don't trust him," came in a chorus of voices.

"I will trust him, for I have confidence that there are too many honorable men about me not to kill him on the spot did he shoot me down."

Loud rang the cheers at this trust in the crowd, and many voices called out:

"You bet you can trust us, and he shall act square."

Buffalo Bill, on this pledge, which seemed to have come from two-thirds of those present, at once lowered his revolver and said:

"I thank you, gentlemen. Now who will act for me?"

A score of men sprang forward, but recognizing one he knew to be a friend of Miner Turpin, the scout said:

"Thank you, I will accept your services, so please find out what the pleasure of Mephisto Mike is."

"He has taken Red-Hand Romeo for his second, and says that he will meet you to-morrow some time." was the answer.

"He has also asked Dick Dash, the dead-shot duelist of the mines, to help Red-Hand," reported another miner.

"Then I will ask you also to aid my friend here, and I shall be pleased to see both the seconds you

name, but the fight shall take place at once, for I am the challenged party."

In vain did Mephisto Mike try to put it off until the morrow, but Buffalo Bill would not hear to it. The outlaw was forced to come to the scout's terms as the challenged party.

It was no easy task to bring Mephisto Mike to terms, for he had hoped, as it was to be a duel and not an encounter on the spur of the moment, to put off the meeting until the morrow.

That there was some trick in this all who knew the desperado felt assured, and every one hoped that Buffalo Bill would not yield.

Mephisto Mike had first selected one second, Red-Hand Romeo; and just at that moment Dick Dash had entered the saloon, and he also was chosen.

These two seconds were as well known in the mines as Mephisto Mike, and even more to be feared.

They also had a "record" as man-killers, and an encounter with them was always regarded, as in Mephisto Mike's case, as fatal to their adversary.

It was Red-Hand Romeo who approached Buffalo Bill and said in his most courtly way:

"Pardon me, sir, but I come from my friend, Mephisto Mike, to learn your wishes for this meeting to-morrow with him."

"You are misinformed, sir, for the meeting is for to-night, and I refer you to my friend here," coolly said Buffalo Bill.

"But, sir, my friend with the diabolical Irish name insists upon to-morrow."

"You are known as one of the desperado duelists of the mines, I believe, for I have so heard you spoken of?"

"I have that honor, sir."

"Then you should know that the challenged party has the right to appoint time, weapons and place of meeting."

"You are right, sir; but, here in the mines, we are not sticklers for such fine points of etiquette in the duello."

"I am a stickler for justice, and I shall insist upon my rights, knowing the kind of a man I have to deal with."

"I will consult my brother second, sir," and Red-Hand Romeo walked away.

Going apart with Mephisto Mike and Dick Dash, the three held a whispered conversation for some

time, and then the latter came up to the saloon where Buffalo Bill was waiting.

"Pardon me, you are Buffalo Bill, the scout, I believe, sir?" he said, in a gentlemanly way.

"You are well known to us, sir, and I honor a brave man; but just now I represent Mephisto Mike, and he demands that his meeting with you should be put off until to-morrow."

"As the party who has the right, I decline, sir."

"May I ask why, sir?"

"I sought no quarrel with your principal; I was interfered with by him when in the discharge of duty, and coming here to-night he deemed himself insulted and demanded an apology. Now, stop this delaying matters, arrange with the two gentlemen here who represent me, and let the matter be settled at once, otherwise I shall take affairs in my own hands and settle it to please myself."

There was no doubting this way of putting the case by Buffalo Bill, so Dick Dash returned to his comrades, and after a few minutes more came back to the scout's seconds and arranged that the meeting should take place right there in the saloon.

Buffalo Bill was wholly unmoved in appearance, chatted quietly with those about him, and turned to his seconds when they announced how all had been arranged.

"We have decided that each one of you stand apart the length of the saloon, facing the wall, the distance being fifty paces, and the lamps hanging along the center from the roof will give you light to see how to aim," said one of Buffalo Bill's seconds, while the representatives of Mephisto Mike stood by. "I have won the toss-up for the word, and I will call out as follows:

"Ready! Right about, wheel! Forward, march! When you have both advanced ten paces, I will give the word: 'Fire!' From that moment you can advance, firing at will. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"The crowd will range themselves upon either side, and should be in no danger certainly, for the saloon is sixty feet wide."

"Is this satisfactory, sir?" asked Red-Hand Romeo, in a tone so insulting that all noticed it and awaited Buffalo Bill's answer.

It came with the calmness natural to him who is deeply moved:

"I could only ask one greater joy, Red-Hand."

It was a cut at his red hand, his crimes, and it was meant, and understood, for the desperado flushed and asked, quickly:

"And what is that, scout?"

"That you were in Mephisto Mike's place."

The shot told, and the men cheered, while Red-Hand Romeo turned white, but made no reply.

He had called forth an attack by his insulting manner toward the scout, and he had been very quickly lenced.

When the principals were in position, facing the all, and with their backs to each other, the two seconds nearest to them stepped back to the line of the crowd.

Then came the call of Buffalo Bill's second standing by Dick Dash:

"Ready! Right about—wheel! forward, march!" The two men obeyed promptly, Buffalo Bill with military precision, and as the steps were told off to them, bringing them within thirty paces of each other, amid a silence that was deathlike, the second called out:

"Fire!"

Mephisto Mike had anticipated the command a second or more, and his revolver was leveled by the time the word was uttered.

Buffalo Bill halted at the shot, and before a second pull on the trigger by Mephisto Mike, he answered.

When the puff of smoke cleared from the muzzle of Buffalo Bill's revolver, he saw the desperado lying upon his face, while quickly turning him over, as he ran to his side, Dick Dash called out:

"Dead! Shot between the eyes—a magnificent shot, indeed!"

The board roof rattled as the words of Dick Dash brought forth a roaring cheer, which was at once followed by hisses and groans from the admirers of Mephisto Mike.

"Don't cheer at a man's death, pards," came in Buffalo Bill's calm tones, and he spoke reprovingly, while Red-Hand Romeo was seen coming quickly toward him, and a cry of warning arose.

But if the desperado meant to open fire, he was checked when he saw the ugly looks about him, and that Buffalo Bill was on his guard, so he said, savagely:

"Now, scout, I am ready to step into Mephisto Mike's place and meet you."

"Is this a challenge?"

"Certainly, for it means your life or mine."

"I am willing—let the same terms govern us," said Buffalo Bill, sadly.

But before another revolver could be forced upon Buffalo Bill, the doors at each end of the saloon were thrown open, and into one came Mr. Turpin, the corporal and eight soldiers.

"Hold men! Our mines shall not be disgraced by our murdering a government officer and my friend, Red Romeo, and you, Dick Dash, I arrest, and call upon all good men to back me up, and the desperado leaders here will be out of the way," said Miner Turpin.

Covered by the repeating rifles of the soldiers, the

two desperado leaders surrendered, and the sergeant quickly had them in irons, where they were led off to the soldiers' camp.

There it was proved that Sue and Marcelite were guarding the five deserters while Miner Turpin went to the rescue of the scout.

So ended the carrying out of the orders given Lieutenant Valdos by Colonel Monastery, and told to Buffalo Bill by Marcelite.

Several days after, Buffalo Bill and the soldiers set out upon the return to the fort with their prisoners, and Miner Turpin insisted upon sending along the ransom for Lieutenant Valdos.

After a week on the trail, Buffalo Bill and his party reached the fort, and the prisoners were in safe hands, and later suffered punishment for their crimes.

At the time agreed upon Buffalo Bill, having the ransom money, went to an appointed meeting-place, and there met the renegade chief, the lieutenant and a score of redskins.

The money was paid, the officer released, the renegade keeping his contract, and the lieutenant and the scout started upon their return to the fort.

On the way Adrian Valdos said:

"Bill, my good friend, I have found out that my unfortunate brother is really dead, for he died of his wounds in the Indian village. We were twin brothers, but he seemed to be born bad, and dogged my steps continually, causing me no end of unhappiness and trouble. Once, when I had a cattle ranch, he captured me and held me a prisoner for two years, to force my property from me, having squandered his share of our inheritance. It was there that I learned the Indians' secret signs, and I used them for protection. It was to see if he was dead, if he was really in the grave of those killed after the big fight six months ago that I went ahead of our party. He was not then, but died later, as I said. Now, we will drop the remembrance of my poor brother."

Moonlight Mines became quite a respectable place after what was called "Buffalo Bill's Clean-out" of the toughs; but Miner Turpin decided to sell out his claims and move East, and Buffalo Bill, Lieutenant Valdos and a squadron of cavalry escorted the miner and young ladies to the fort.

Nearly a year after, Sue Turpin became the wife of Lieutenant Valdos, at the same time that Marcelite was wedded to a handsome young aide on her father's staff; and Buffalo Bill sent as wedding gifts, a valuable lot of border souvenirs to each bride, with best wishes for all happiness through life.

THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 40) will contain "Buffalo Bill and the Prairie Wolves; or, Hunting the Bandits of Boneyard Gulch." The true story of the great scout's experience with the strangest band of desperadoes ever unearthed in the West.

ATTENTION !

ATTENTION !

Another Contest—More Prizes

Here is another Prize Anecdote Contest, Boys. The last was such a big success that we just had to have another. We want

More Thrilling Adventures

You know what exciting stories of hair-breadth escapes and thrilling experiences you have been reading in the **BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY** lately. You want to read more about them, don't you? Well, send them in. Whether you find yourself a winner or loser in the last contest, you have a splendid chance for the splendid prizes we offer in this new contest. You have all had some narrow escapes, some dangerous adventures in your lives. Perhaps it was the capsizing of a boat, or the scaling of a cliff, or a close shave in a burning building, or something else equally thrilling!

Write It Up Just As It Happened

We offer a handsome prize for the most exciting and best written anecdote sent us by any reader of **BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY**. Incident, of course, must relate to something that happened to the writer himself, and it must also be strictly true.

It makes no difference how short the articles are, but no contribution must be longer than 500 words.

This Contest Will Close May 1

Send in your anecdotes at once, boys. We are going to publish all of the best ones during the progress of the contest.

HERE ARE

THE PRIZES

Three Spalding Catcher's Mitts.

Three Spalding Infielder's Gloves.

Ten Spalding Baseball Bats.

Ten Spalding Long Distance Megaphones.

The Three Boys Who Send Us The Best Anecdotes

will each receive a first-class Spalding Catcher's Mitt. Made throughout of a specially tanned and selected buckskin, strong and durable, soft and pliable and extra well padded. Has patent lace back.

The Three Boys Who Send The Next Best Anecdotes

will each receive a Spalding Infielder's Glove. Made throughout of selected velvet tanned buckskin, lined and correctly padded with finest felt. Highest quality of workmanship throughout.

The Ten Boys Who Send The Next Best Anecdotes

will each receive an A1 Spalding League Baseball Bat. Made of the very best selected second-growth white ash timber, grown on high land. No swamp ash is used in making these bats. Absolutely the best bat made.

The Ten Boys Who Send Us The Next Best Anecdotes

will each receive a Spalding 12-inch "Long Distance" Megaphone. Made of fireboard, capable of carrying the sound of a human voice one mile, and in some instances, two miles. More fun than a barrel of monkeys.

To Become a Contestant for these Prizes
cut out the Anecdote Contest Coupon, printed herewith, fill it out properly and send it to Buffalo Bill Weekly, care of Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York City, together with your anecdote. No anecdote will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

Coupon Buffalo Bill Weekly Anecdote Contest

PRIZE CONTEST No. 3.

Date.....

Name.....

City or town.....

State.....

Title of anecdote.....

Watch for announcement of the Prize Winners in the Contest just closed. Their names will appear in No. 41.

PRIZE ANECDOTE DEPARTMENT.

Just look at the announcement of the new contest on the opposite page before you read any further. The old contest closed last week with a whirlwind of letters that just missed being too late. Some of these late arrivals may win a prize; almost all of them are interesting and exciting stories. We will print a few, which are too good for you to miss, boys.

How It Feels to be Drowned.

(By Maurice D. Merrill, N. H.)

One day I took my fishpole and started to fish around the pond (about three miles). When I got about half round I came to a neck of land jutting into the water. I cut across this neck and came out on a shelving piece of rock about fifteen feet above the water. I stood on this ledge gazing at the "shinners" darting back and forth, when the rock, rotten with age, broke, and I was thrown into the water. I landed on my stomach with such force that the wind was knocked from my body. Although I could swim a little before I couldn't now, for my roots were full of water and my breath gone. I sank at once. My readers can imagine how I felt drowning without any one to help me or even see me to know where I had ended my life. I went down twice. The third time I struck a tangle of roots at the bottom. I didn't know anything about it at the time for I was insensible. The next thing I knew I was in bed all one up in warm blankets. Wasn't that a narrow escape? I had been rescued by a friend who saw me sink and who dived down and freed me from the roots which held me below water.

A Fall from a Cliff.

(By Robert E. Holley, St. Louis, Mo.)

It was the 1st of December; the day had commenced with a pattering rain which had finally turned into snow, and as I sat there before a cheerful fire in my father's cabin away out among the Blue Ozarks, listening to the wind as it howled and whistled around the corners, I felt in my coat pocket for my constant companion, the Buffalo Bill Weekly. I had just started to read it when I was startled by a long, loud scream which sounded so human like that I stopped and listened. I thought at first that it was some traveler who had lost his way in the storm. I did not hear it again, so I began to think that I might have been mistaken, when it was repeated longer and louder than before. I did not wait any longer, but put on my overcoat, took my rifle down from the rack and left the cabin. I started on a run toward a hill, called the "Tall Pines," where I thought the sound had come from. I reached the hill and started to climb an almost perpendicular cliff when I suddenly lost my foot and shot downward like a cannonball. I tried to stop my downward flight by grabbing a piece of scrubby, but it snapped off and I gave up all hope. I felt myself sinking down, down into darkness. I had closed my eyes, expecting that my time had come, when I struck the bottom with such force that it stunned me for a few seconds. When I came to I began to look around me to see what kind of a place I was in. I found that I was in a den of some wild animal, and I felt very much scared. There were only two open-

ings to the cave, one twenty feet above me, the one I had fallen through, and the other in the rear of the cave. I got on all fours and started to go out that way when I saw something that made me jump back, striking my head on the rocks.

There coming toward the opening was a big, black, ugly-looking grizzly bear! I quickly rolled a large stone into the opening which partly blocked it up, and I could see Mr. Bear prowling around and trying to move the stone away. I soon found out that I was in a pretty serious position as Mr. Bear had no intention of going away, so I began to pile stone after stone, one on top of the other, until I reached the top of the opening, but it was a long and hard job, and it was only as night began to fall that I made my escape, and as I reached the open air I gave a lusty shout that fairly shook the woods so good it seemed to be safe once more! And as the old log cabin came into view and I was home I forgot all about the scream which I had heard and which was the cause of my adventure.

Run Over by a Street Car.

(By Thos. Sidham, Chicago, Ill.)

A few years ago I was selling papers at the corner of Eighteenth street and Wabash avenue. I jumped on a car going south, and while selling a paper to a man on the car was carried about one-half a block. I crossed the street with the intention of riding back to Eighteenth street on the first car that came along. I jumped on a car going that way, and while still on the lower step the conductor came out of the car and pushed me off.

The city at that time was digging up the street with the intention of laying water pipes and the dirt was piled for about a block, along and near the track. When I was pushed off the car by the conductor I fell on this pile of dirt and slipped down the dirt pile and under the car. I tried to keep myself from going under the car by catching a hold of the car and pulling myself up. I pulled myself up far enough to draw all but my right foot from under the car. The car ran over the toes of my right foot and crushed them so badly that four of them had to be taken off. When the car ran over my foot I did not feel any pain, only a numbness that you will feel very often in winter when your feet are cold. This all happened so quickly that I really did not know that I was run over until the car was about a block away.

I was then taken to a doctor's office and when he had bound up my foot I was taken to the hospital, where I was in bed for about six weeks. I have decided to stop jumping on cars for the rest of my life.

My Adventure on the Water.

(By Morris Brokaw, N. J.)

When I was ten years old, my father being a wealthy merchant, sent me to Hude's Academy, a large school on the Hudson River. I was a restless and disobedient boy, so my father thought it best for me to go away from home, where I would become better.

After I had been at the academy two or three weeks I became very friendly with a boy named Weston Hoagland.

One hot day in July after school was over Weston said to me:

"Willie, will you go and have a sail with me unbeknown to the master?"

At our school we had two fine boats. One was a sloop, and the other a catboat. The rule was for no one to go out sailing without telling the master.

"Yes, I will go," I replied.

"Come on, then," he said, so we both went down to the dock and jumping into the sloop, pushed her off. Weston asked me if I knew how to run a sailboat. He said he had sailed in a sloop many times. All went well going up the river. We sailed about ten miles, having a very delightful time. About five o'clock we turned the boat around, heading for home. The current was going with us, and Weston could not control the boat. The boat went so fast that we went right by the school, and would have been lost if one of the teachers had not jumped into a rowboat and taken us ashore.

An Adventure with a Panther.

(Loomis Pugh, West Virginia.)

On the 3d of January, 1901, Martin B. Taylor and I were out on a hunting expedition in the mountains of New River, about twenty miles east of Thurmond, W. Va.

We had gone but a short distance when the scream of a panther attracted our attention, and thinking ourselves equipped for any emergency we sat down to await the coming of our animal. On he came closer and closer, screaming more terribly than ever until he was within about thirty yards of us, when we both emptied our revolvers in that direction, thinking it would be an easy task to slay our antagonist. When the smoke had cleared away we found to our horror that we had only crippled him, and now it seemed that he was more determined to devour us than ever before. With one great effort, he sprang toward us, but fortunately for us, I struck him on the head with my gun stock, and he fell upon the ground apparently dead. Before we had time to think he was upon his feet, and sprang up again, this time it was a fierce struggle which lasted for some moments, but after receiving a number of scratches we succeeded in ending his life by pounding him with our guns.

A Perilous Voyage.

(By H. Stone, Chicago, Ill.)

During the summer of 1899 William Jacoby, Polak Buck and I started in a sailboat from Chicago to Waukegan. We got as far as Grose Point, Ill., when a terrible hailstorm, from the north, struck us.

We let go the anchor to ride through the storm. We had been anchored about five minutes when the anchor cable broke.

We set the jib and mainsail, and ran before the storm. When we were off Randolph street, between the crib and the lighthouse, we tried to put up the sprit, when the sail jibed on. In trying to haul in the sail, Bill let go the tiller. A strong wind caught the sail, threw us over on our beam ends and shifted the ballast. We lay over so far that the force of the water split the mainsail. A return wave righted us, otherwise we would have capsized.

We ran under the jib to Eighteenth street, while Buck and I bailed the water out. We lowered the jib and raised the foresail and ran, as far as Eighty-seventh street harbor, where we tried to run in. But as we were going through the opening, the current was so strong that it carried us back about twenty feet. As we had lowered the sail in trying to go through the opening, we now raised it again. The wind filling the sail drove the boat against the pier, breaking the bowsprit, the shears, knocking the combing loose.

We had no oarlocks, so I held the oar while Bill rowed, and Buck kept the bow from striking the pier with the other oar. Till we got to the end of the pier. We raised the sail and sailed into the harbor at Thirty-ninth street, and so ended our perilous voyage.

Almost Burned to Death.

(By Geo. Jones, Augusta, Ga.)

I was living on the outskirts of the town with my grandmother in a very ancient house. I was six years of age. One day my grandmother told my cousin and myself to go out and get some wood and put it on the fire. We got the wood and began to put it on. When I was putting it on a string which was tied around my leg caught afire.

As soon as I discovered that it had caught fire I ran out the door with my cousin, both of us screaming. The kitchen was separated from the house and my grandmother and other were in the house.

Hearing our screams, they ran out of the house. The wind was blowing, and by that time I was aflame from head to foot. My grandmother tried to smother the fire, but it was no use. My cousin got a bucket of water and threw it at me, but missed me. By that time my skin was burning. The second time she threw the water at me the flames were put out. I was taken into the house half dead.

Our Oil Well Scare.

(By Hodge Mason, Los Angeles, Cal.)

Last vacation I was working on an oil well. We were drilling on top of a hill and had reached a depth of about 500 feet when we lost our drill, a big piece of iron screwed into a casing at the end of the rope.

Losing a drill is nothing unusual, and we set about recovering it, but could not get it, so we had to postpone work until we got another drill.

The next morning we went to the well, and imagine our surprise when we found the drill lying upon the platform. We did not try to explain the mystery, but set to work again.

Soon afterward we lost a wrench down the well, and the next morning we found that upon the platform. The "Greasers" or Mexicans working with us began to get scared and the next night (we worked at night sometimes) when the drill came up covered with phosphorus and shining like fire.

the Greasers thought we had made connections with that land with a warmer climate, and accordingly quit work, and the rest of us were feeling pretty puzzled, not to say scared.

In this way things went on, tools being lost in the well and showing up mysteriously again, until everybody began to think the well was "un poco loco," as the Greasers say.

At last one night an explosion took place at the bottom of the well, sending dirt and stones high into the air, and then the authorities thought it time to investigate.

The hill was examined, and a small opening was found concealed behind a rock. Going in we found a cave with the oil well shaft going through it.

Some boys had discovered the cave and played the tricks, taking off the drills and returning them some night when we were not working.

This was a pretty tame ending to our scare, but the well still bears the name of "El pozo loco"—The Crazy Well.

Nearly Blown to Pieces.

(By John J. Ogle, N. H.)

I am now thirteen years old and although I was but a "kid" at the time this accident happened I can remember it distinctly. My father worked on the railroad and had purchased some large dynamite caps, which he put in his tool chest, but I found one and hid it in a drawer. Not long afterward I was trying to make an awl from a piece of steel which was sharp at both ends and could not be used to much advantage. Suddenly a bright idea came to my mind. I got the cap and put it over one end of the steel, hammering the open end down around the wire, but when nearly finished I hit the wrong end and it "went off."

What happened after that I do not remember, for I was rolled up in bandages and put to bed. My hands, face and legs were filled with pieces of brass, and although never removed they have never done me any harm. I'll never monkey with caps again.

A Ghost Story.

(By Glen McCracken, Iowa.)

I had been to a party. We had been telling ghost stories till it was past one o'clock.

I was feeling as if a ghost was ready to jump in front of me at any time when I left the house. I had about three miles to walk through some timber. There was one house I had to pass on the way home. It had not been in use for years because people said it was haunted by a man who had been killed here. He was a miser, they said, and was killed for his money. Since his death his spirit had returned at night and made the night wild with its screams.

As I neared the place I was shaking with fear. It was a moonlight night, and the pale light gave the house a weird aspect. When about twenty feet from the house I heard a sound of rattling window glass and a sound like "chomp chomp." At the same time something white came around the corner of the house. Its shining eyes glittered in the moonlight. I took one short look, and I was gone, running for life. I never stopped till I reached home. I told the folks my experience. They laughed at me, but I was firm. I did not sleep that night. Next morning my father came in saying that there was an old white horse by the house, with a halter with right brass fixtures.

Off Block Island in a Gale.

(By Harold A. Lover, Dayton, Ohio.)

Last August while spending the summer at Block Island, I went sailing with two young men. Including the skipper and mate of the boat, our party numbered five persons. The boat, which was a thirty-three footer, went scudding along in a fine breeze for about an hour when the skipper noticed some clouds low down on the horizon. Those clouds told me nothing, but to the skipper they meant a gale, and very soon it came, wind, rain and waves that tossed our boat about like a cork. To make matters worse, we lost our rudder, and after tossing about the boat finally capsized.

I found myself in the water. All was dark, but I soon discovered that I was under the upturned boat. This scared me, and I began to plan a means of escape. I decided to dive under the gunwale, which I did, and this being successful, I came up outside.

Now began a battle with the waves. I struck out for shore, but seemed to make but little headway, but at the end of what seemed a long time I heard the surf pounding on the beach. This gave me a new fear. I pictured myself thrown violently up on the beach and killed perhaps, but I struck my head on a large rock, which I afterward found to be about two hundred feet from shore, and then everything became black.

When I came to I was lying by a fire of driftwood and my friends were around drying themselves.

Out about half a mile from shore floated our boat on a calm sea, for the waves had receded and the wind had gone down. To say I was thankful that it was not worse is putting it mildly.

A Fearful Accident.

(By Roy Smith, Groton, S. Dak.)

One Friday afternoon about 2 o'clock I started out hunting with my new gun, which I had just bought. I was hunting on an artificial lake about two miles from home. I did not get a shot at any ducks, and I was waiting for some to fly over, when I saw a flock of blackbirds. I thought that I would take a shot at them. I was just going to raise the gun up to shoot, when the right hammer caught on the crossbar on the boat and discharged the gun, which was loaded with five drams of powder, and one and one-eighth ounces of number two shot, which shattered my right arm from the elbow to the shoulder. I did not think I was hurt very badly, but I could not row the boat, so I jumped in the water, which was not deeper than up to my hips. I began to shout and a hired man on the farm heard me. By the time he reached me I was so weak from the loss of blood that I could hardly walk.

He got me to the house and then took a horse and buggy and drove me to town, about four miles away. On my way to town I stopped and told my mother that I had shot myself, and was going to see the doctor. The doctor was not there at the time, but he came in about an hour. I was placed on his table and chloroformed. When I awoke from the influence of the drug my arm had been taken off. In about three weeks I was able to be around again.

An Adventure with a Mustang.

(By Aaron Sweze, Philadelphia, Pa.)

While I was away in the country last summer I went to a horse sale with my uncle. He bought a pair of unbroken mustangs that looked as gentle as lambs, and did not have life

enough in them to buck. I said I would ride the smaller of the two home. I no sooner got fairly seated than he commenced to buck. When he found he could not throw me that way he lay down and began to roll down, but I happened to be a little too quick for him that way, and thus got through all right.

When he got up I was on his back again and he started to run. The harder I pulled on his mouth the faster he ran. He ran about five miles as hard as he could go and then he stopped short and I went over his head into a puddle of water about three feet deep. I thought my neck was broken. When I got my wits about me I looked around for him and found him eating the grass along the sides of the road. I then caught him, but you can bet your sweet life I did not get on him again. I would not go through it again for a hundred dollars. This is a true experience. Fellows who read Buffalo Bill stories if you ride horses, take my advice and do not ride a horse you do not know anything about.

A Murder Case.

(By R. Maker, Mass.)

On the second day of August a number of friends and myself were passing a large boarding-house when we heard a woman's scream inside. As you may imagine, we ran up the steps jumping three at a time. When we opened the door we were struck aghast by seeing a woman with a large Mexican dagger in her throat and catching a glimpse of a man disappearing through the window. I just had time enough to grab the villain by the collar. I hung on to him like a tiger until a number of us got him down, and then we called for a police officer who happened along just then. He put the handcuffs on the murderer and took him to jail, and the man was afterward hanged.

A Close Call.

(By Ralph B. Norris, Brooklyn, N. Y.)

When I was five years old I lived at Ridgewood, N. J., a town situated on the Erie Railroad four miles west of Paterson. I was possessed with a desire to linger around the railway station and see the trains come in. Although forbidden by my parents to go near the track, I constantly disobeyed them, such was my craze to watch the engine come snorting and puffing in, and to dream of one day becoming an engineer. My home at that time was but five minutes' walk from the depot, so I that I had not far to toddle to reach the scene of my longing.

One day I ventured on to the track, a thing I had never previously dared to do, and stood gazing first up and then down the narrow, shining rails that seemed to stretch so far away into the unknown world where I longed to go. Suddenly around the curve a mile away came a black, swiftly moving thing with a ribbon of smoke curling backward from its head. Scarcely realizing that it was a locomotive, I turned to flee, when (such is the swift punishment that overtakes the transgressor) my foot caught between the boards that divide the two tracks and a rail, and I was a prisoner—a helpless, struggling prisoner. For, try as I would, my foot would not come free. Do not think I was too young to realize my position. I felt, I knew that certain death was near. I can feel now the wild beating of my little heart, and the choking gasp of my breath that seemed as if it would tear my terrified little body in pieces. Nearer and nearer came the big, black monster. Oh, how swiftly he was gliding toward me on those shining rails that I had thought so beautiful only a brief moment before! I cast a despairing glance around, but no one was in sight; but I could catch a glimpse—just a glimpse, no more—of the chimneys of my home, and this sent a kind of sharp agony through me that I can feel even to this day. A shrill scream burst through my quivering lips; another, and—Oh, joy beyond all words!—the portly form of Mr. D.—, the

well-known plumber and tinsmith of our town, appeared round the corner of the depot. I stretched my trembling arm out toward him. Seizing the situation at a glance, he ran to me, and wrenching, with his strong grasp, my foot from its trap, literally tore me from under the wheels of the East bound limited express, the fast "flyer," whose only stop was Paterson, four miles away!

Poor Mr. D.—! He was pale as ashes, and so was I. Mr. D. had been gone, lost in the mad rush of the throbbing monster, and I never saw it again. But what mattered that? I was safe—I was alive, and I needed not the reprimand of the excited Mr. D.— (who was of Hibernian birth, and, as he was wont to say, "proud of the job!") to start for my home instantly. Only he put it in rather different style, something like this: "Run home, ye red-headed little devil! An' if I catch ye nee, this thrack again, I'll—"

I did not wait for more. Poor, kind, brave Mr. D.—! He has gone to his last home, but I shall never forget him, nor the day he rescued me from a swift and terrible death.

A Storm on the River.

(By James Phillips, Pa.)

This story of our adventure on the Monongahela river is the truth, and nothing but the truth. It occurred in the year of the great Galveston horror, when, if you recall it, the tail end of that great storm struck Pennsylvania. Myself and a friend of mine were out on the river in an old flatboat, the sides of which were cracked all the way along. When you didn't sit in straight water would pour into it. We were rowing about the river for pleasure, when all of a sudden and without minute's warning, the wind began to rise and in less time than it takes to tell it waves were breaking on the river ten feet high. The wind first struck us on the side, and was gradually blowing us right into death's jaws. I was a good rower and swimmer, too, but neither accomplishment was any good just at the time, and to make matters worse for us one of our oarlocks pulled out, and it took me about two minutes to get it in again and adjust it. As I got it and started to pull the wind changed and started to push us right into shore again and when about twenty yards from shore our boat went all to pieces and we were both thrown into the water, but I managed to grab my companion under the arms and finally after a very hard tussle landed him safely on shore. I received reward from him and his parents for saving his life.

A Narrow Escape from Death.

(By Gus Doughty, Ind.)

Tom was a youth of fifteen, who lived with his parents near Anderson.

One Thanksgiving Day I went to his home to ask him to spend Thanksgiving with me.

"I would, Gus," he said, "but I have to go out in the country and buy some corn this morning." After a silence of a few minutes he added, "If you will go with me to buy the corn I will spend the remainder of the day with you."

I told him I would be ready to go in an hour.

We started about an hour after the above conversation, and arrived at our destination in due time. When the corn which Tom bought was loaded into the carriage (we went in a carriage) we started home.

When we had rode about a mile we came in sight of the bridge over Fall Creek.

Tom looked at his watch and said, "Gus, I am going to see how long it will take us to get to the bridge."

When we were crossing the bridge I saw a covey of quails come out of the field by the roadside, and I pulled on Tom's arm to attract his attention to them.

When I pulled on his arm the horse turned and would have run over the edge of the bridge and pulled both of us into the creek nearly twenty feet below, where we would both have been drowned. If I had not seen our danger, pulled on Tom's other line and turned the horse back in the road. Was it not a narrow escape from death?

BUFFALO BILL STORIES

(LARGE SIZE.)

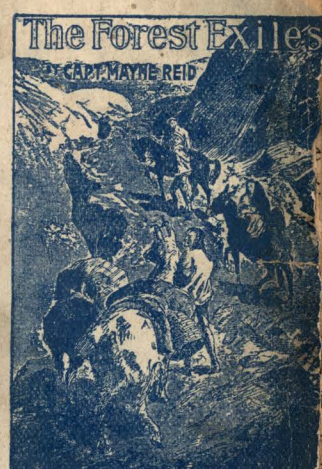
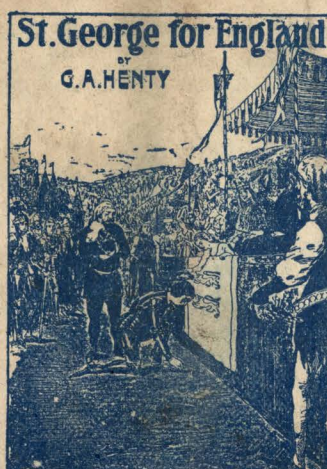
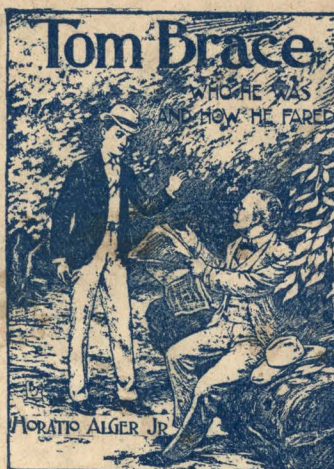
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